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PREFACE

American history is so intricately related to the old world that no true interpretation can be rendered which does not take into account European origins. Of all American institutions the churches more than any other, are the perpetuation of the faiths and doctrines which grew in European soil. The changes that have been wrought within the different ecclesiastical bodies through the process of transplanting vary in degree and importance. Some have taken on a special American garb and today have little in common with the mother church across the sea. Others have remained in intimate relation with their European brethren and differ little from them in faith and practice. Among these churches must be listed the many branches of the Lutheran Church in America, within whose numbers are found represented all the nationalities of European Lutheranism. Often nationalism is the only mark of difference separating one Lutheran body from the other, in America, while in doctrine and practice there may be almost absolute agreement. Danish Lutheranism represents one of these national groups.

The story of Danish Lutheranism in America is the theme of this study.

In order that the aspects peculiar to this group of Lutherans may be fully understood it will be necessary to cross the ocean to their European home. Here alone can be found the soil and spirit out of which developed the tendencies

that have manifested themselves in the Danish Lutheran churhhes in America. There it will be seen were represented at least two and usually three distinct schools within the Danish State Church, which under American influence, could not remain under one roof, but found expression in two distinct church bodies.

The spiritual and intellectual streams from Danish sources emptied themselves into the church life in America; however, they alone cannot account for the peculiar develop ment of Danish Lutheranism in America. It will further be necessary to study and understand the men and the women who made up the human materials upon which these tendencies worked. Sh the Danish immigrant must be visited in his European home-surroundings and followed as, out of different motives, he seeks his home in the new world, where as a rule he did not come to seek opportunity better to express his religious convictions.

Having followed the Danish immigrant into his new environment, it is essential that a clear conception be formed of how he responded to the religious forces about him. Such study will soon bring to our attention the two different Danish Lutheran bodies which attempted to bring under their influence the children of the mother church in Denmark. In the face of the practical problems of organizing and starting a Danish church in America, it will appear evident that doctrinal problems did not come to the surface.

In the next place, it will be shown how the principles and tendencies carried over from the homeland, gradually forced themselves to the surface and rent asunder one of the Danish Churches. Religious beliefs and convictions of men again proved stronger than an ecclesiastical body and outward union. Under the free spirit of the new home a complete realignment was possible, out of which developed the two Danish churches, which by the year 1900, were fully established to carry forward an aggressive program among the Danish people in America.

CHAPTER I

THE EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

Among the Scandinavian Lutherans in America the Danish Lutherans probably reflect their European background more truly than any other group. Into the two Danish church bodies, the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church and the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church[1], have flown freely two living streams of church life within the Danish Church, that is, Grundtvigian and Inner Mission influences. The larger freedom of the State Church in Denmark allowed these two forces to operate within the one organization. Here the theological differences found equal financial backing and official recognition. When transplanted into the new world new problems were faced which emphasized the theological differences until finally they were given concrete expression in two separate Danish churches. These facts, however, do not alone answer for the characteristics of the Danish Lutherans in America today. But back of these lies Denmark itself, the land and its people. Its sons and daughters have carried with them into the land of their adoption the influences of Danish geography life and thought. Not only have the geography and characteristics of the Scandinavian countries left its physical stamp upon the peoples but deep into their very natures have been written certain tendencies typical of their own native lands.

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1. The two churches will be referred to as the Danish Church and the United Church.

The ruggedness of the Norwegian Fjord lands as well as the signal beauty of the Danish low-lying coast-lands have produced their human counterparts. Says Babcock: "Nature is no spendthrift in any part of the Scandinavian peninsula; small economies are the alphabet of her teaching, and her lessons once learned are rarely forgotten. Her children of the North, therefore, down to the stolidest laborer, mountaineer, and fisherman, are generally industrious and frugal, and when they migrate to the American West, to enter upon the work of pioneering, with its stern requirements of endurance, patience, persistent endeavor, and thrift, they start out in the new life with decided temperamental advantages over most other immigrants; and even over most native-born Americans."[1]

Thus the hard teacher of the North has produced a race that, because of industry and frugality, is good material for pioneering. The Northern European differs substantially from his Southern brother. In his veins still flows the blood of Viking forefathers. Restless he faces an uncertain and hard future. But it has endowed him with a love for the adventurous. With strong courage he has learned from his taskmaster, Nature, to face the unknown without fear. That such an outlook upon life should tend to emphasize the importance and value of the individual is but natural.

Early in the history of the Scandinavian people there is found an evident hatred of serfdom and slavery though it

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1. Babcock, K. C., The Scandinavian Element in the United States, 16.

was comparatively late that the former came to an end in Denmark. In this atmosphere high ideals of personal and political freedom developed at an early date. And the struggle to attain to these created ever changing social and political situations. When the sons and daughters of the Norse lands began to turn their faces westward they were by nature endowed with a capacity for adapting themselves to new and changing conditions. There were certain psychological factors in the Dane, however, that warred against this adjustment, made his struggle harder and checked his progress and assimilation in his new home. The highly developed individualism of the Dane manifested itself particularly in his religious life as we shall see in the unfolding of the story of the Danish churches in America. How then did the Dane differ from his northern brothers? Says Babcock again: "The Dane is the Southern of the Scandinavians, but still a conservative. He is gay, but not to excess; the healthiness and jollity of a Copenhagen crowd are things to covet. He is pre-eminently a small farmer or trader, honest and persevering, although not given to great risks; he is quick to see a bargain and shrewd in making it. Of self-confidence and enterprise he manifests a decided lack. His country is small, open on all sides and near the great powers; his interests have led him out from his peninsula and islands, and foreign influences have more affected him than they have his neighbors across the Sound and the Skager Rock. His best work

and literature[1] have been done under strong Romantic and classical impulses from the South."[2]

There have been no great economic or political upheavals[3] in Denmark that have forced the Dane to seek a new home beyond the borders of his own mother country. Militarism, which has often been crushing in other European nations have never been a vital problem in Denmark. On the other hand, nature has been kind and often prolific to the southern Scandinavians. Denmark's fertile meadows and friendly beach forests were places where life was pleasant and inviting. The peaceful coast towns, nestled away in the calm Danish fjords lived in free commercial relations with the outside world.

Denmark is not a waalthy country. With an area[4] of about 16,568[5] square miles, it has a population today of 3,434,555[6]. Greater Copenhagen and its suburbs alone have a population of 731,496.[6] While in 1911[7] the urban population was only 26%, there has been a movement toward the cities so that today the population is about equally divided between city and country. Unlike Sweden and Norway, however, it had several important colonies in other parts of the world[8] which called its

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1. Cf. work of H. C. Andersen, Thorwaldsen, et al.
2. Babcock, K. C., op. cit., 18.
3. Cf. Norwegians, J. M. Rohne, Norwegian American Lutheranism up to 1872. 4, 8, 13, 14, 15.
4. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut combined.
5. Encyclopedia Britannica (14th edition) Vol. VII, 216.
6. Op. cit., 204.
7. Babcock, K. C., op. cit., 20.
8. Statesman's Year book, 1914, 789ff.

sons out for service and adventure. Economically Denmark has usually been in moderate, though not in prosperous circumstances. Satisfied with existing conditions the Dane did not so readily break the home ties. "The causes of the smaller emigrations from Denmark", as we shall see below "are to be found in the nature of the people and in the condition of the kingdom itself. Generally speaking, the Danes are not highly enterprising and adventurous or self-confident; instead of daring all and risking all for possible, even probable advantage, they remain at home, for 'Striving to better, oft we do mar what's well." Want is practically unknown in Denmark outside the slums of Copenhagen. The condition of the common people has steadily improved since the beginning of the nineteenth century, when nearly all of the land was in the hands of the nobility; at the present time[1] six-sevenths is owned by the peasants. Cultivation methods improved and increased the productive power by ten. No nation, except the United States and Canada, has in recent time had such agricultural prosperity."[2] This period of reconstruction during the nineteenth century kept the Danes busy and content in the homeland. By nature of a conservative mind the call of the foreign shores had little appeal, so that the annual emigration figures never passed 12,000, the maximum being reached in 1882. It must further be noted that continued political and ecclesiastical preaching to the lower classes helped to induce the descendants of the independent Vikings to submit slavishly

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1. 1911.
2. Babcock, K. C., op. cit., 62-63.

to the condition of things. However, the spirit of freedom was not dead.[1]

Though Denmark long ago adopted the state controlled church idea there has been little evidence of theological pressure from ecclesiastical authorities. On the whole the spirit of freedom has held full sway in the Church of Denmark. When the Reformation went beyond the borders of Germany it was only natural that Denmark should be among the first countries to be affected. Lutheranism was introduced into Denmark as early as 1536.[2] Complete religious toleration in Denmark was usually taken for granted as it is today. However, the non-Lutheran bodies have always been very small in number. Nominally at least the great bulk of the population was and is Lutheran. To understand the history of the Danish Lutherans in America it is essential that we have a clear conception of the different movements within the Danish State Church. While one may speak of three distinct theological schools[3] which sought refuge within the state supported institution, only two are of importance in the interpretation of Danish American Lutheranism: namely, Grundtvigianism and the Inner Mission movement.

While the United Church is the most influential one in America today there can be no doubt that the influence of Grundtvigianism has left its distinct mark upon both Danish Churches in America. The religious awakening that stirred the peasants of Denmark during the nineteenth century found an able

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1. Nelson, P.N., History of the Scandinavians and Successful Scandinavians in the United States, Vol. II, 40.
2. Encyclopedia Britannica, 204.
3. High Church, Grundtvigian, Inner Mission.

leader in N. F. S. Grundtvig. More than any other man of the century he succeeded in exerting his lasting influence on the church in Denmark as well as on the nation.

Grundtvig, born September 8, 1783, came from a family of devoted Lutheran pastors. In his boyhood days he manifested the tendencies that were to make possible his chief contributions to the church and the nation. His passionate patriotism and love for history made him the great champion and inspirer of all that was Danish. At the age of seventeen he entered the University of Copenhagen where he was to receive the inspiration for his life's task, not in his theological studies, but rather in his reaction against these and his growing love for Danish literature and mythology. This ancient city with its historical and cultural traditions became, throughout the greater part of his life, the scene of his activity as well as the chief source of inspiration. Here he met the great minds of his nation, who gave him a new religious outlook. Here he poured forth his spirit upon the hearts of thousands of his own countrymen in speech, poem and book.

It was a student poor in the material as well as in the spiritual riches that came to the university in the year 1800. His pietistic uncle, the Rev. Dr. L. F. L. Bang, gave him one meal a day and preached to him frequently. This almost marked the limit of his spiritual indulgence for during his three years of student life he only attended church once.[1]

As a student Grundtvig found no inspiration in the dry, rationalistic lectures in theology at the university.

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1. Rosendahl, H., Grundtvig, N. F. S., Et Livsbillede, 26.

Satisfying the desire and tradition of the family he, however, finished his theological studies. But when he passed his final examinations in 1803 he ended his university career without faith and spiritually at sea. Years of inner struggle followed. His interests drifted here and there seeking something that would satisfy his soul. He soon began to show interest in the poetical phase of religious experience. His first literary attempt along this line appeared in 1807 under the title of "Religion and Liturgy." In this he reasoned that the Catholic Church, through its liturgy especially, had tried to create religious poetry. This he regarded as an important contribution through which the reality of religion can be expressed in worship. Rationalism, he contended, had on the other hand simply tried to make a philosophy out of the liturgy, stripping it of all religious reality. Grundtvig was aroused by this tendency of robbing the Danish liturgy of all that was emotional and romantic and at once proceeded to add those phases of religious expression so characteristically Danish. Says Bille: "Another marked peculiarity of the Danish character is a love for the ideal, the emotional, the romantic. This characteristic shows itself in the literature, in the every day life of the people and in many of their social institutions. But it is most strikingly exhibited in the remarkable influence exercised by N. F. S. Grundtvig on the social, political and religious life of the people."[1]

Grundtvig with his many sided interests, full of

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1. Bille, J. H., A History of the Danes in America, 2.

apparent inconsistencies, gradually became influential. He loomed up very soon pre-eminently a poet and reformer, possessing the romantic temperament of the one as well as the courage, enthusiasm and persistence of the other. The state of the church as well as his own spiritual life began to trouble him. To the serious minded young theologian came the ambition to reform the Danish church, then under the influence of French rationalism, as he called it. At first he desired - as so many have before and since - to restore what he considered to be old fashioned-living Christianity and true Lutheranism. Early in his life this meant little more than an implicit belief in the Bible, coupled with a pietistic philosophy of life. That the principle underlying his simplicity of faith and pietism should have in it the germs of a type of rationalism, common among his spiritual children, Grundtvig did not realize.

In his literary discussion theological topics became the central theme. After dealing with the liturgy he turned to a discussion of the sacraments. Throughout his life, and in the religious school he inaugurated, the observance of the sacraments became of central importance. In baptism, he reasoned, man became Christ's disciple, while in Holy Communion man touched the highest and holiest for which he is striving. Baptism and Communion "can no more be changed than religion itself."[1] Here in the sacraments as well as in the liturgy and church prayers he labored for a larger poetical emphasis.

His first open break with things as they existed in

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1. Rosendahl, H., op. cit., 37.

the established church came in 1810 when he left Copenhagen for another field of labor. In his farewell sermon he openly and courageously attacked the lifeless and spiritless state of the church. A counter attack was opened against him by the rationalistic theologians who held official and influential positions in the church. The consistory published an official condemnation of Grundtvig's position, but his sermon was well received and honored by the masses. The religious struggle had fully gripped him.

The next two years[1] find him in the quiet country parish of Udly, assisting his aging father in the ordinary pastoral duties. Here his religious convictions grew and matured. His next move was an open attack on the so-called "modernistic" Lutheran preachers who, he said, had no right to call themselves Lutherans, no nnt even Christians.[2] Through his vehement attacks he offended many of the prominent liberal theologians. The time was approaching when he was to face court charges; but, as often happens in the history of the church, the economic situation of the country changed the course of events. The state treasury became bankrupt which took the attention of the people from the theological controversy. Taking new courage under the existing conditions he began once more open attacks on the condition of spiritual stagnation in the church. When he returned to Copenhagen in 1813, however, he found many pulpits and homes of old friends gradually closed to him. The traditional conservatism of the time feared his radical reform

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1. 1911-13.
2. Op. cit., 60.

ideas.

His purely religious reforms did not seem to call forth any large response. It was only when an ardent patriotism began to color his religious ideas that his influence became widespread. The fact is that in the course of time his patriotism became almost his religion, a fact which has exerted an important influence on the history of the Danish Church in America.

His polemic attitude - a conservative pietism - kept him without a pulpit from 1813-1821. During this period he was very active in literary and scientific disputes and problems. Through the kindness of the king, whose personal admiration he had gained, Grundtvig was appointed to a small, but ideal parish at Praestoe in 1821. After but a year of service, royal kindness again smiled upon the ardent preacher and he was called as chaplain to Christianshaven. This was a blow to Grundtvig's enemies. His position was becoming more secure and his influence upon the church increased perceptibly. His new position placed him in the strategic center of church life. It gave him new confidence. His sermons, some of which later appeared under the title "Christian sermons or the Sunday Book" drew much comment. They were exceedingly critical and as one writer puts it: their purpose was more to arouse hatred of the unbelievers than love for faith.[1] When in 1824 he

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1. Op. cit., 93.

became co-editor of "Tidskriftet", an anti-rational journal, he was accused of religious treason. But Grundtvig contended that no one could forbid a congregation from seeking religious satisfaction where it pleased as long as pastors could believe and preach what they pleased. It is this independent individualism that has characterized genuine Grundtvigianism in the land of its birth as well as in the land of its adoption.

Grundtvig himself consistently insisted upon a liberal interpretation of the Bible - not of the rationalistic type - and greater freedom in regard to religious worship, than was generally permitted in the state church. He fought against the rationalism of theological professors and pastors; he fought the vices of the age and still he was not a pietist in the usual sense of that word. He considered a good Christian life, baptism, communion and the Apostles' Creed the very life and marrow of Christianity, rather than the Bible.[1]

In 1825 he again came into open conflict with one of the capable leaders of the opposition, Professor H. N. Clausen. This eminent theologian, who was of Prussian Union tendencies, had great influence with the students.[2] The dispute finally brought Grundtvig into court where he was fined one hundred Rigsdaler. But the most serious part of the sentence was that which read that he was to be under censure for the rest of his life. This, however, was later removed. Before final judgment

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1. Nelson, P. N., op. cit., Vol. II, 53.
2. Rosendahl, H., op. cit., 103.

was passed Grundtvig had ceased to be a pastor of the state church. Among his many reasons for withdrawal from the established church was his old objection to the marrying of divorcees and to having unworthy persons at communion.

During the next thirteen years, 1826-39, he was again without a pulpit.[1] This is the period of his chief literary productivity. While he continued his attacks on rationalism he also turned the minds of the people toward a new idea, namely, the folk-high-school, which began to occupy much of his time and thought.

In his religious and theological speculation new developments took place also. He reached the conclusion that God still is the direct source of light and life in a very real sense. But this presence of God must naturally be sought in his own divine institutions: the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, which took on almost a magic nature. Another theological change that he experienced must be mentioned here. The study of Irenaeus and other fathers impressed upon him the importance of the confession in the Apostles' Creed. A remarkable and far reaching change took place in his theological position.[2] "He dropped the idea of the Bible being an infallible guide, asserting that a belief in the Apostles' Creed and the words of the communion service coupled with a Christian life, was all that was necessary for membership in the true Christian

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1. Op. cit., 112.
2. See above, p. 12.

church. But in his opinion the living of a Christian life meant an active, sympathetic participation in all the affairs of life. He wished to substitute feeling and activity for doctrinal discussions and formalism and individual judgment for blind acceptance of creed. Being intensely patriotic his love of country became thoroughly identified with his religion."[1] In his interpretation and emphasis of the creed he went so far as to regard it as a divine expression and statement of our Christian belief, as it has existed from the beginning given and pronounced by the Savior himself. It alone must be the key to the interpretation of the Word of God. Back to Apostolic Christianity was his cry.[2] Among later Grundtvigians few have been willing to go all the way with their spiritual father on this point. While this conviction grew upon him his ardent love for Denmark also became stronger day by day. It is impossible, said he, to love God and not love one's fatherland and mother-tongue. He began also to advance the idea that each nation had a special mission to perform in the world and had been especially appointed and trained by God to perform that mission. From the traditions and history of the Danes, he inferred that to them was given the mission of re-uniting all the Christian churches, to re-establish "peace on earth and good will toward men," the highest and most sacred mission of all.[3] As often happens with a man of power, his friends have made the

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1. Bille, J. H., op. cit., 3.
2. Rosendahl, H., op. cit., 112-13.
3. Bille, H. H., op. cit., 4.

mistake of accepting every word from him as a self-evident and literal truth, while his enemies have made the equally unfortunate mistake of looking at and criticising his weaker and sentimental utterances - things which he wrote and said under great emotional stress. His work "Kirkespejl"[1], a series of church historical lectures given in 1863, undoubtedly has given us the fairest representation of his views on the subject of nationality and religion. In this we find reflected his spirit, out of which poured forth one of the richest storehouses of the Danish church: its beautiful hymns. Here, mingled with religious idealism and sentiment, he sang a new nationalism and painted the beauties of nature.[2] This picturesque religion with its poetry, myth, saga and patriotism - all of which he still claimed to be old fashioned Lutheranism - gained many adherents. A spirit of religious and patriotic enthusiasm was aroused which is being perpetuated in the Danish Lutheran Church in America to this day. Laymen began to preach and to exhort. Home missionary societies were organized and meetings of the revival type became the order of the day. The early leaders of the Danish Church in America like R. Andersen, A. Dan, A. S. Nielsen and others, were the products of this movement, lay-missionaries who received ordination in America.

But the important features of this agitation, so far as the home land was concerned, was the establishment of the

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1. i.e. "church mirror".
2. Rosendahl,H., 140.

called folk-high-schools. Opposed to the deadness and traditionalism of the schools he purposed that the aim of these schools should be to inculcate a deeper religious and patriotic sentiment and to this add knowledge of the practical things of every day life: as farming, carpentory, etc.[1] That these schools have been of considerable influence is unquestionable. They have proven to be of value to a small country like Denmark with its homogeneous population where rural and agricultural problems are foremost. Their mechanism and program, however, have not been a stimulant to intellectual activity. With no class room recitations, no examinations to urge on the weak, the general lectures have tended to minimize intellectual exertion. Again the observation might be made that these high schools have created more patriotism and love for poetry and less respect for authority, especially pastoral authority, which proved to be one of the great problems in the early days of the Danish Church in America.

It must be remembered here that Grundtvig's great desire was to touch and change the life of the masses. He loved man and was concerned with his welfare, physical, mental, cultural, as well as spiritual. Said he: "The pietists are wrong when they hold that all human is pure corruption and that the divine image is utterly lost. When the truly human is developed the way for Christianity is prepared. For the true way of faith is: First a human being, then a Christian." This optimistic outlook upon life earned the Grundtvigians the name of joyful Christians.

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1. Bille, J. H., op. cit., 4.

And one can truthfully say that in many of the Grundtvigian homes a simple but joyful and active Christian life was lived.[1]

But hand in hand with this, it must be remembered, came an individualism of a creative type that without doubt has brought its big contribution to Danish folk life at home and to a lesser degree to certain localities in America. Whether this individualism, with its emphasis on the "joy of living", always has a constructive influence within the church, might well be disputed. Says Bille: "The Grundtvigians are thorough-going optimists. They call themselves Christians, but also take part in all the pleasure and activities of life and concern themselves little about doctrinal points."[2] This spirit, wholesome though it might be and the special result of the folk-high-schools, met a good deal of opposition when transplanted to American soil.

It was in the thirties and forties that Grundtvig's activities in behalf of the high schools were especially felt. Already as far back as 1813 the restless theologian had shown interest along this line, especially in regard to the problem of further training of the adolescent age.[3] His hope was to bring influence to bear upon the large masses of uneducated young folks. They were to enjoy especially training in Danish

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1. Jørgensen, G., Den Danske Kirke's Historie for Hjaem og Skole, 150.
2. Bille, H. H., op. cit., 6.
3. Rosendahl, H., op. cit., 146.

literature, Christian and cultural history, all to be taught in a Christian atmosphere. This movement of folk-high-schools grew to be an influential factor of Danish life and thought. It is not an exaggeration to say that as far as Denmark is concerned these high schools were Grundtvig's greatest gift to his mother country.

In 1832 Grundtvig began to hold private meetings, with preaching services, apart from the established church. It at first threw him into conflict with the police and ecclesiastical authorities. But his independent spirit was proven and maintained when he rented a hayloft for church services.[1] His peaceful spirit and patient endurance as well as the cultural emphasis of his movement won for him the graces of the king who used his influence in locating him as pastor at Vartov hospital in 1839. With the accession of King Kristian VIII and Queen Karoline Amalie to the throne, December 3, 1837, Grundtvig's hope brightened still further. Already in 1837 Kristian, then Crown Prince, had succeeded in having Grundtvig removed from under the ban of censure. And again through the assistance of the Queen, Grundtvig was able to make a trip to England in 1843 for historical studies.[1] The poet and scholar was here able to satisfy his interests in the history and saga of Viking mythology.

Upon his return to Denmark Grundtvig found his position of leadership assured and he entered fully into the current theological and ecclesiastical struggles for larger freedom. In

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1. Rosendahl, H., op. cit., 152.

1845 he thus became the defender and supporter of Rev. Kierkegaard in his objection to forcing baptism upon children of Baptist parents.[1] Though largely successful from the practical point of view, forced baptism was not finally abolished until 1856. Thus with the passing of the years Grundtvig's circle of influence widened. From 1849-56 he became active in politics while serving in the Danish Rigsdag.[2]

Grundtvig's home life was a happy one. Here he met his friends and inspired them with his love for poetry and all that was Danish. With a new outlook upon life and a new religious experience and assurance many young pastors went out into the parishes of the state church to perpetuate the spirit of Grundtvig. A man ripe in years and service the poet and reformer died September 2, 1872. Of his children we need but mention one, F. L. Grundtvig. He was the son of Grundtvig's second wife, a woman of finest culture and noble Christian character. As a student he came to America, where he finally received ordination and for a good many years served as pastor of the Danish congregation in Clinton, Iowa. Though he fell far short of the genius of his famous father, he nevertheless became the living link and transplanter of Grundtvigianism from Denmark to America. His theological convictions and views on the church reflected those of his father.

The battle for more freedom of thought and life within the church did not come to an end with Grundtvig. He had seen

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1. The Baptist were quite active in Denmark during this period.
2. Rosendahl, H., op. cit., 215.

wonderful results in the church, while his folk-high-school idea had been well received. Also in the relation of pastor and congregation the reformer hoped for more freedom. During the last years of his life it was his joy to see important steps made along this line, especially in regard to giving congregations of the state church the right to elect their own pastors. V. Birkedal[1], the main disciple of Grundtvig, was also very influential in securing equal recognition within the state church, of "free" congregations. A new law[2] in regard to church government at once called forth some free congregations, which made use of their new privilege of electing their own pastor. Begbrup, while he points out the enthusiasm with which this new freedom was greeted, also calls our attention to the dangers that followed in its wake. "The spiritual life which came forth from Grundtvig's circle of friends spread freely...out over all phases of the Danish people's life... and became gradually quite weak in that it was affected by other more superficial movements of its times."[3]

The effect of this "free church movement" became more and more important. Many congregations succeeded in choosing pastors of the Grundtvigian school, especially such men as were "folk-minded." Other churches simply became free churches so that they could elect the pastor they wanted, whether Grundtvigian or not.[4] Through this transformation it was not simply

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1. Begtrup, H., Det Danske Folks Historie, Vol. IV, 143.
2. Valgmenighedsloven
3. Op. cit., 223.
4. Pontoppidan, M., Dansk Kirkeliv i Mands Minde 85

the pastor who became more folk-minded and less presuming; on the whole, church life became freer, more natural, happier and more active than was common in the old, somewhat perfunctory and cold community church.[1] As the free church idea gained more momentum, it tended to break up and upset all tradition and custom. It was a bitter enemy of make-believe Christianity[2] or habit-communion[2], which in a special sense was a thorn in the flesh of all honest Grundtvigians. Naturally the overzealous would want to free themselves of all state connection. And from the free church idea it was an easy step to the totally independent congregation. While this movement never swept the country it must be remembered that important economic problems played their part here. With all the freedom allowed within the state church it was much safer and more comfortable for the pastors to live under its sheltering roof than to become subject to the wishes and whims of the independent congregations. A good many of the Grundtvigian pastors who came to America to serve such independent congregations drank to the full that bitter cup and then sought a place of comfortable safety in some peaceful parish of the homeland.

As the Grundtvigian stream of thought and religion gained strength parallel currents appeared. Moving away from under the directing influence and sanity of the mother movement these were apt to lead to eccentricities and produce features objectionable to Christian tradition. While Grundtvig had hoped to transform and strengthen the Christian church, as

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1. Sognekirke, church for a county or the like.
2. Vanekristendom and Vanealtergang.

often happens in such movements, he indirectly became the father of such forces that threatened the equilibrium of the church. Yet out of the same conflict arose another movement largely as a protest against Grundtvigian influence. When Grundtvigianism was weakening there "appeared a new, strictly religious awakening which owed its impetus to a new spirit, under the leadership of V. Beck. It left deep traces upon the life of the people, though one of its chief leaders stood aloof from all that was counted as belonging among "worldly acts."[1] With such an attitude of mind the movement often was branded "narrow", especially as it presumed to sit in judgment over others. Says Begtrup: "This narrowness and affinity for judging others (Dommesyge) has caused many conflicts and still more painful divisions among the Danish folks who ought to live as peaceful neighbors and in useful cooperation."[2] It was the Inner Mission movement, a pietistic school which contributed much to new evangelical life and missionary activity within the state church.

To pick up the thread of development we must go back to Grundtvig's work. A group of his ministerial friends, such as P. Fenger, Fr. Hemmerich and P. Boisen had started the "Society for Lutheran Folk-enlightenment." Laymen were admitted as members. It was from among these that some capable men were chosen to be lay-preachers, as (butcher) Joergen Pedersen and (blacksmith)[3] Jens Larsen. These men began to hold "godly meetings" in their own communities.[4] About 1850 Jens Larsen

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1. Begtrup, H., op. cit., 223.
2. Op. cit., 224.
3. Known as Slagter Joergen Pedersen and Smed Jens Larsen.
4. Pontoppidan, M., op. cit., 106.

thought he felt a special call to preach. He laid down his trade and began to journey as a traveling evangelist. Being a member of the Society of Lutheran Folk Enlightenment he negotiated at first with them hoping to secure his financial backing from this group. But Jens Larsen's patience grew tired of the drawn out negotiations. Independently he set out to preach the Gospel. A certain success followed him in his new endeavor, born of his unbridled enthusiasm. In some places he was well received. But in other places the local pastors put up snares in which to catch this independent revivalist. As Jens Larsen's first fire began to die down he came to feel the necessity of a more solid organization to back him and support him financially. Income was uncertain. His family was suffering actual want. Under his appeal was created the first "Society of Inner Mission", a somewhat different organization in character and purpose than the later Inner Mission movement which it was instrumental in bringing forth. On September 17, 1853, a group of laymen on the island of Seeland met and organized the above society, which took on Jens Larsen as its first missionary, promising to support him "according to their ability." The promised support was small enough the first year, but was practically nothing the second.[1] There can be no doubt about Larsen's sincerity, which, however, did not atone for his eccentricities. He preached much and contributed frequently to the "Inner Mission Tidings,"[2] the official organ of the Society for Inner Missions. But when it became evident that Jens Larsen

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1. Pontoppidan, M., op. cit., 107.
2. Indre Missions Tidende.

wanted to dictate the policy of the society, trouble soon arose. The other members seemed to realize that if the cause were to prosper it was essential to secure the full cooperation of the pastors. Consequently they appealed to some of the pastors, friendly to the society, and finally in 1858 succeeded in electing the Rev. C. F. Roenne chairman. Several of the new ministerial members were somewhat suspicious and afraid of the work Jens Larsen was carrying on. No doubt Larsen had been greatly influenced by Grundtvigian principles, but had gone far beyond the hopes of his spiritual teacher. These early Inner Mission leaders, all laymen, had come under Grundtvigian influences, but developed stronger pietistic tendencies.[1] It is of interest to note that these lay-leaders hailed from a section of Seeland where Baptist and Mormon missionaries had been very active and successful.[2]

The opposition to Larsen finally came to a head at the annual meeting on September 18, 1861. The executive committee threatened to resign unless Jens Larsen was dismissed. During the course of the discussion a young, devoted pastor suggested a remedy for the evil and danger of lay-preachers, namely, that the bishops examine all lay missionaries and thus keep in touch with them and have a check upon them. The tenseness of the situation increased as the differences grew. Again upon Johannes Clausen's suggestion, a very important thing happened. When the situation became serious,

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1. Bille, J. H., op. cit., 21.
2. Begtrup, H., op. cit., 225.

Rev. Johannes Clausen assumed the leadership and they persuaded the young Reverend V. Beck to preach the main sermon at the annual meeting.[1] This discourse was largely a critical attack on Larsen, who later was forced to resign when the society refused to support him further. With the resignation of Jens Larsen an extreme current of Grundtvigianism came to an end. But its failure brought forth a new movement, governed by a new spirit, which was personified in V. Beck, its future leader. What Grundtvig was to Grundtvigianism, Vilhelm Beck was to become to the Inner Mission circle; its father and life. Almost at once Vilhelm Beck took the reins. Under his leadership and personality Reverend Roenne and others were persuaded to start anew. They reorganized under the name: "Church Society for Inner Mission in Denmark," with Roenne as chairman. The society was to be a part of the "holy, universal church and its Lutheran division in this land;[2]" and at once it published its program of evangelistic work; but at the same time took great care to announce that it had severed all relations with missionary Jens Larsen. Soon V. Beck was chosen editor of the official paper "Inner Mission Tidings" and thus he assumed the real leadership of the new movement which he held indisputably until his death.

"Vilhelm Beck was a born leader and organizer and he understood how to keep minor frictions out of his activities. The Inner Mission he wanted to be a work within God's kingdom

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1. Op. cit., 113.
2. Op. cit., 118.

and should therefore be no party former; it should stand on evangelical Lutheran foundation and have nothing to do with sectarianism."[1]

Vilhelm Beck was born in a Danish parsonage December 30, 1829, near Slagelse and here he died as county pastor[2] in 1901.[3] Though his father was a provost he saw little practical Christianity in his home. No prayers, no hymns, etc. were heard in my home, says Beck. But there was society, cards, drinking in which he as a young man enjoyed to take part. Without giving the problem much thought he took up the study of theology. Like Grundtvig he faced the end of his university years with a shaken faith. While he showed no special religious convictions and interests he was much under the influence of the drama, especially Shakespeare. The epistles of Paul, however, had for some time had a direct message for him. And the great Soren Kierkegaard had appealed to him indirectly to look upon Christ's life as a reality and possibility.[4] After his theological examinations he sought satisfaction in teaching for some time. The rationalistic pastors of his day drove him from the pulpit. It was when conversion was dawning upon him that he said: "It was clear to me that I could never be a pastor. I thought that all pastors were asses; and it seemed to me that I could be no more, and that I did not want to be."[5]

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1. Joergensen, G., op. cit., 160.
2. Sogne-prast
3. Begtrup, H., op. cit., 228.
4. Op. cit., 232.
5. Op. cit., 232.

After a dramatic farewell to cards and the dance he turned toward a more serious life. Rather than become the chaplain to his father in May, 1856, he preferred a small congregation. The spiritual stagnation and indifference of his first congregation roused him to action. Vehemently young Beck began to attack the sin and worldliness practiced in connection with baptism, weddings, etc. Preaching to his people he said: "Cease to bury your dead ones as human beings while you yourselves live and die like animals. Put the dead one down in the middle of the room. Let the young folks dance around it, while you old ones play cards. Then lay the body on your backs as you do other dead animals. Carry it to the graveyard and bury it like any other animal. That would all be in best harmony with your animal-like celebration."[1] This was plain talk. The older ones remonstrated. But the younger folks came to him. And he soon found himself a leader of the new movement. Many pastors at first refused to have anything to do with this new "fanatical movement", but the war of 1864[2] brought a new opportunity. Johannes Clausen[3] became an army chaplain and with him the Inner Mission Society sent six lay preachers into the army. Through this contact with the army many doors were now opened to the Inner Mission cause, through-

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1. Op. cit., 234.
2. Danish-Prussian War when Denmark lost the province of Schleswig-Holstein.
3. See page 25.

out Denmark and especially in Jutland.[1] In 1865 Clausen and Beck made a big tour throughout Jutland holding successful mission meetings.[2] In 1866 V. Beck moved to Oerum, Jutland, where he labored successfully for eight years, each year gathering a larger Missionfest on Himmelsbjaerget.[3] The year 1874 found him as pastor back in the church of his birthplace. At first the parishioners were offended at his vehement preaching, but Beck soon began to draw individuals to himself. At first he opened his home to them where prayer meetings, children's services and the like were held. The deep evangelical note, which filled his preaching and life, was the power that gripped his parishioners. Though often domineering, he was forceful, always ready to rule, but also capable of so doing. These Inner Mission folk were thoroughgoing pietists who called themselves the "holy-ones" or "saints"[4] and professed to despise all worldly pleasures. They insisted on the absolute belief in total depravity and the literal belief in the Bible, so contrary to Grundtvigian teaching.

Under the powerful influence of Vilhelm Beck, the Inner Mission cause grew rapidly. Beck was soon traveling throughout the whole country carrying on evangelistic preaching in churches, in the beautiful Danish beech-woods, in Mission Houses, etc. Many lay-missionaries went about the country

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1. It is to be remembered that quite a number of the Danish pastors came from Jutland, who later came to the United States.
2. It was during this period that they secured the services of A.T. Nielsen, a tailor, who soon became a traveling preacher for the Inner Mission Society, until in 1871 he went to America to take a leading place in the founding and development of the Danish church.
3. Highest hill in Jutland, Begtrup, op. cit., 246.
4. Bille, J. H., op. cit., 21.

preaching in villages and farm houses. Beck's steadying hand guided the organization so that it did not become sectarian, but remained within the church.[1] A special feature of the movement was the building of mission-houses or houses which served as hotels and meeting places. During the years 1880-90 their numbers grew from ten to four hundred. In 1900 there were one hundred forty-seven Inner Missionaries and eighty-six colporteurs serving as agents of this society within the state church.[2] To safeguard the society economically Beck arranged Mission districts, each of which gave its annual contribution in accordance with the need of the society. This principle was early made part of the working program among the Danish Lutherans in America.

The Inner Mission in Denmark is a union of believing and faithful pastors and laymen within the state church who work in harmony and conjunction with the church for the purpose of awakening and nurturing a life in faith on an evangelical Lutheran basis, as well as the furthering of believers in a communion of saints.[3] Loft states: This goal is arrived at by means of (1) public meetings throughout the kingdom, (2) by personal work in the Homes through lay missionaries, and (3) by the publishing and distributing of religious literature... Sin and grace may be said to be the key words of the Inner Mission message.

So down through the latter half of the nineteenth

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1. Pontoppidon, M., op. cit., 132-4.
2. Begtrup, H., op. cit., 160.
3. Loft, S. S., Inner Mission Movement in Denmark, 3.

century and up to the present time there are three distinct tendencies within the Danish state church: (1) The Grundtvigian, (2) The High Church,[1] and (3) The Inner Mission. The Grundtvigian followers emphasize the development of the national spirit and aim primarily at a cultural and practical education of the masses rather than a development of a strictly spiritual consciousness of the individual. In Denmark as well as in America they attempt to attain their goal by means of the folk-high-schools and by popular lectures in churches and meeting houses.[2] The baptismal formula and Apostles' Creed are considered to be the Word of God, more central in their system of theology than the Bible itself. In fact, these are regarded to be the keys which unlock the meaning of the Word of God. A goodly number of the Grundtvigian disciples believe in a second probation after death and therefore participate freely in the pleasures of the world, a problem which aroused a great deal of dispute just before and during the schism period of the Danish Church in America. "The High Church people," says Loft, "guard zealously the official character of the Church, and look with disdain and suspicion upon any Christian work and activity not directed and executed through the regularly and officially appointed channels of the church."[3] The influence of this group has not been felt among the Danish Lutheran pastors in America, who, generally speaking, were looked upon as men of inferior training.

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1. Kirkeligt Centrum
2. Forsamlingshuse, a typical Grundtvigian institution which has an Inner Mission parallel in the Mission House in Denmark.
3. Op. cit., 4.

As the tide of emigration turned toward American, the other two living and creative tendencies were brought along. Here we shall meet them and study them as they struggled to adjust themselves to a new home, in most respects so different from the little homeland across the sea. Here the two schools come into more open conflict until finally they choose to work out their destinies separately, each tendency emphasizing its own particular position. In the succession of events this was undoubtedly the best solution, for there is a great deal of truth in what Bille says: "In spite of the fact that the two factions have a common origin, they are irreconcilably opposed to each other. The differences have been carried over into America, accounting for the two Danish churches: the Danish and the United Danish Church."[1]

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1. Bille, J. H., op. cit., 23.

CHAPTER II

DANISH IMMIGRATION TO AMERICA

"There were Danes in America before there existed a nation called the United States."[1] Danish blood flowed in the veins of the Pilgrim fathers who came largely from the section of England once held by the Danes. Other writers point with pride to the early Norse discoveries of northern America, centuries before Columbus reached the shores of this continent.[2] Be this as it may, the early Danes in America, as well as the Norse discoveries, have had little lasting significance in subsequent American history. But it is only justice to state that from the beginning of the permanent settling of North America the Danes have made up their limited quota and carried their humble load in the building of our mighty Empire. During the age of discovery, the Scandinavian countries did not escape the general desire for expansion. In fact, it was right in harmony with the general seafaring life of the roaming Vikings, Norsemen and Danes alike. "Our forefathers began about the time of the Reformation to open their eyes a bit and think about a trade reformation", says another writer.[3] Christian II, then King of Denmark, was a brother-in-law of Charles V, and was able to bring about trading contracts which brought Denmark into close commercial relations with the American continent.[4]

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1. Vig, P. S., Danske i Amerika, 4
2. Christensen, T. P., Dansk Amerikansk Historie, 9.
3. Pontoppidan, E. L., Afhandling af Verdens Nyhed, 420.
4. Vig, P. S., Dansk Udvandring, 14.

These events took place long before the heavy emigrations to America began. Numerically speaking, therefore, these migrations were small and insignificant. In fact, one can only point to a few individual Danes in these early days of American history.

The first recorded Danish attempt at establishing a colony in North America dates back to the early years of the seventeenth century. On May 9, 1619, there sailed from Copenhagen, Denmark, a certain Jens Munk to seek a northern sea route to the East. Just four months later, September 7, he landed with his crew at the mouth of Churchhill River. Though a Norwegian himself, Jens Munk was of Danish blood. And now in command of a Danish expedition, he took possession of the new land in the name of the Danish king and called it Nova Dania.[1] The harshness of the following winter months claimed the greater part of Munk's crew as its victims. When the survivors turned their backs on their newly gained possessions in July, they left behind them the first Lutheran cemetery on the North American shores. The great majority of the sailors professed the Lutheran faith, a fact which is substantiated by the presence of a Lutheran pastor in the expedition. The Rev. Rasmus Jensen[2], from Aarhus, Denmark, acted as chaplain to the above explorers. On Christmas Day, 1619, this Danish Lutheran pastor preached his first and last sermon on American soil. Caught in the clutches of the same epidemic

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1. Evjen, J. O., Scandinavian Immigrants in New York, 376 ff.
2. Jensen, J. C., American Lutheran Biographies, 399-401.

that almost wiped out the new settlement, he breathed his last on February 20, 1620. To Rasmus Jensen there falls the honor of being the first Lutheran pastor to preach and die in America.[1] Of that early Danish winter camp, headed by Jens Munk and under the spiritual guidance of Rasmus Jensen there is nothing left but some unnamed graves and sacred memories. But let us remember that this sad drama of Danish history in America was written before New England was in the process of becoming the mother tree of our great land.[2]

This same spirit of adventure and commercial enterprise had established important relations between Holland and Denmark. During the reign of Christian II there was a lively trade between the two nations. Back to those days the Dutch colony on the Danish island Amager dates the beginning of its history.[3] With the live-stock that was exported to Holland a goodly number of Danish laborers emigrated to Holland where they found new and larger opportunities.[4] But this relationship becomes of special interest when we learn that via Holland a good many Danish Lutheran sailers and traders came to the Dutch colony, New Amsterdam. As early as 1624 there were Danes and Norwegians in this colony. Throughout the whole Dutch regime, and even after, these Danes took active part in the daily life of the new colony. Only a few names of these early

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1. Evjen, J. O., 377; see also Anderson,R., Dansk Ev. Luth. Kirke i Amerika.
2. Vig. P. S., Dansk Udvandringer, 15.
3. Encyclopedia Britannica.
4. Among these a number of Luth. dissenters, see Vig, P. S., Danske Udvandringer and Danske i Amerika, 4.

Danish settlers have come down to us. In a careful study of the early study of the early Scandinavian settlers in New Amsterdam, Dr. J. O. Evjen is able to identify fairly accurately 99 Danes, in addition to which he lists 7 more about whose nationality he is somewhat in doubt. It is an interesting fact that there were more Danes in New Amsterdam at this time than there were Swedes[1] and Norwegians[2] combined. The religious intolerance of the Dutch made it difficult for the Danes to enjoy the faith of their mother country. No doubt a good many went into the Dutch Reformed Church for peace sake. Yet in spite of the religious restrictions of New Amsterdam it is an established fact that there were Danish Lutherans in the city who remained faithful to their Lutheran church. Among the early Danish Lutheran leaders of those days one name stands out prominently. That is Jonas Bronk[3], who was the son of a Lutheran pastor. At his death he left a fine library, consisting chiefly of works on Lutheran theology.[4] Among the list of Danish Lutherans we can but refer to a few outstanding characters, especially to such as we know remained members of the Lutheran Church. Of Carsten Jansen Eggert, whom Dr. Evjen lists as a native of Schleswig Holstein, we know but little besides the important fact that "Eggert was one of the few

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1. Thirty-four Swedes, 57 Norwegians.
2. Evjen, J. O., op. cit.
3. Bronx Borough and Bronx Park are said to be named after Jonas Brunk (Bronck).
4. Evjen, J. O., 167 ff.

(Danish) Lutherans in the new world, who at such an early period bequeathed a legacy to the Lutheran Church of the city of New York."[1] Some of these early Danes took active part in the futile struggle for securing a Lutheran pastor. In 1657 Jacob Elderson and other Lutherans petitioned the Dutch authorities that a Lutheran preacher J. E. Goetwater[2] might stay in the city instead of being deported.[3] When the Lutherans of New Amsterdam found things too uncomfortable there they began to move away to Albany and other places. Among these weagain find Danish Lutherans. One of them, Volckert Jansen, was one of the signers of a petition which requested "that their congregation of the Augsburg Confession at Willemstadt (Albany), be given free exercise of their religious worship without let or hindrance, to the end that they may live in peace with their fellow burghers."[4] We are told that Jansen's wife was a Lutheran, though there seemed to be no indication of her nationality. Intermarriage with other nationalities was quite common in these early days by force of circumstance. While no lasting influence can be registered it is well to remember that even in the early struggle of Lutheranism in America the Danes did their share.

There is still another door by which Danish Lutherans

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1. Op. cit., 197.
2. Wentz, A. R., The Lutheran Church in American History, 27,35; also Jacobs, H. E., A History of Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, 52ff.
3. Evjen, J. O., 197; also Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York I, 405 ff.
4. Evjen, J. O. op. cit., 222. Other signers see p. 251,278.

entered the North American continent at a very early date: the West Indies. Though the direct influence of Danish Lutheranism upon these islands spans a longer period than in the United States, little notice and study has been given it by Danish Lutherans in America.

When in 1665 Denmark took possession of the islands by purchase from France, the Danish Lutheran pastor Kjaeld Jensen set out with an expedition of 117 for the new colonies. Eighty-six of these, among them their spiritual leader, died during the long sea journey.[1] From the beginning the islands enjoyed a certain degree of religious liberty, though only the Lutheran and Reformed Churches were allowed to hold public services. Under the Danish charter, however, it was only natural that the Lutheran church should enjoy special privileges. Danish Lutheran pastors came to the islands representing the state church of the homeland. Mission work was opened among the negroes and institutions of mercy were built, all receiving financial support from Denmark.[2]

During the early Danish occupation a lively trade developed between the West Indies and the English North American colonies, the chief commodities handled being slaves, rum, and sugar.[3] With the trade a good many Danes found their way to the English colonies.[4] Among the wealthier planters of the West Indies it became quite proper to send their children to

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1. Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 11.
2. Op. cit., 14.
3. Vig, P. S., Dansk Udvandring, 20.
4. Andersen, R., op. cit., 412-17.

America to attend school, especially to Philadelphia. Some very capable Danish Lutherans in this way came to and finally settled in America. While not all manifested interest in the church yet some of them kept in touch with the Lutheran church, though no attempt was made to establish any separate Danish church.

An outstanding personality among the West Indies' Danes who came to America was Joachim M. Mogens. Born in St. Thomas in 1715, he later travelled north and for some years lived with his family in Flushing, Long Island and New York.[1] During this period he held his membership in the Dutch Lutheran congregation in New York where he met some of the leading Lutherans of his day such as the Lutheran patriarch, H. M. Mühlenberg, who for a short time was pastor in New York.[2] Mogens made a distinct contribution to the American Lutheranism of his day by his translation of the first large Danish Book into English: Magister Peter Nasekom's forty sermons on the Augsburg Confession, which was published in New York in 1754.[3] Other influential Danes who came to America from the islands were such men as Abraham Markoe,[4] Christian Febiger or Fibiger[5], who became an important figure in the business and political life of the colonies, Little definite reference is found in regard to their religious

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1. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 23.
2. Jacobs, H. E.
3. Vig, P. S., 23.
4. Op. cit., 24.
5. Op. cit., 25; see also Danske i Amerika, I, 94, 171 ff.

life, but undoubtedly most of these Danes continued their affiliation with the Lutheran church. The relation of these Danish Lutherans to American Lutheranism, however, was never more than incidental. When the islands finally became American by purchase the church work, strangely enough, was not taken over by the Danish Lutherans in America but by the United Lutheran Church.[1]

When German pietism sent its first representative, H. M. Mühlenberg, to America to plant the Lutheran church, the same movement also made its influence felt in Denmark. The Danish province Slesvig was the field of activity of German pietism. This new movement in Denmark sent Ziegenbalch and Plutschau as missionaries to Tranquebar, South India. When the appeal came from America for more help, the Danes of Slesvig responded also. From among the sturdy peasants of this little province came one of Mühlenberg's early and faithful helpers, the Rev. Peter Brunnholz[2], a native of Nyboel, Slesvig.[3] He was one of the charter members when in 1748 Mühlenberg organized the first Lutheran synod in America, the later Ministerium of Pennsylvania. While his work was chiefly among the Germans, Brunnholz always regarded himself a Dane.[4] As the Lutheran church expanded in America, Danish Lutherans, whether laymen or pastors, have added their strength and support. The

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1. See below, p.198
2. Wentz, A. R., op. cit., 58, 60; see also Jacobs, H. E., 220 ff. 239-46.
3. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 29.
4. Andersen, R., op. cit., 202, 215.

English-speaking Lutheran church in America, the present United Lutheran Church, has always had among its clergy capable and self-sacrificing men of Danish birth. Though these have stood in no official relation to the Danish Lutheran churches here or in Denmark, there can be no doubt that they have brought their contribution by inculcating their peculiar Danish heritage into the life of the English Lutheran Church, contribution perhaps of more lasting importance and influence than those brought by pastors who have confined their labors solely to the Danish Lutherans in America. Suffice it to list but one or two of the early leaders in this line of labor.

As a candidate of theology P. C. Sinding came to America in 1848, where he attempted to organize a Scandinavian congregation in New York. Failing in this he secured a position at the University of New York as professor of Scandinavian languages and literature, in which field his greatest work was done.[1]

One of the leading men of the former Synod of the South was Dr. Anders R. Rude.[2] Born in Denmark in 1813 he came to America at an early age where he received all of his education, and for that reason might be denied a place among prominent Danish Lutherans in America. After graduation from the Gettysburg seminary he entered the Lutheran ministry giving the greater part of his service to the South. Those who knew him well praise him for his piety, wisdom and scholarship. His

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1. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 49.
2. Andersen, R., Banebrydere for Kirken i Amerika, 170 ff.

field of influence was enlarged when called to become professor at the southern seminary at Columbus, North Carolina. But probably of more general importance still was the part he played in working out a liturgy for the early Southern Lutheran Church.[1]

We shall mention one more influential Lutheran clergyman of this period, Dr. Edmund Belfour. Though his activities as a pastor were confined entirely to the English-speaking Lutheran Church he was a full-blooded Dane and continued the Danish tongue and spirit. As a boy eight years of age he came to America with his parents in 1841. Through struggle and hardship he fought his way through school until in 1854 he graduated from the University of New York with honors. After his theological training in the Gettysburg Seminary he entered upon a long and distinguished career as pastor. In 1874 he was called by the General Council to establish their work in the important and strategic center of Chicago. During six years of successful service ere he founded Trinity Church on the north side and the Wicker Park church on the west side, the latter to this day one of the important English Lutheran churches in America. He counted himself among the conservative Lutherans of his day. One of his most important contributions to the church as a whole was his translation from the Danish in 1877 of E. Pontoppidan's catechism, which for many years was the most popular English translation, shown by the fact that by

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1. Vig, P. S. op. cit., 49.

1897 not less than 20,000 copies had been printed.[1]

So far we have only dealt with individual Danish Lutheran immigrants, to be sure, who labored in and for their church in America. But none of them played any part in the formation of a church whose purpose it was to minister specifically to their own fellow Danes. The reason for this was in most cases the simple fact that few Danes as yet had come to this country to settle. Not till well past the middle of the nineteenth century were there enough Danes in America to call for organized church work among them. We shall now turn to a study of the causes and nature of the immigrations that brought larger numbers of Danes to American soil. The general cause for emigration was that natural human desire to improve the condition of life, desire for adventure, etc. This was especially true among the Danes who were friends of the ocean. The oceans roll in. But it at the same time calls out. So it called out the sons of Denmark to seek better circumstances in far away America.

Dr. P. S. Vig in his pamphlet on Danish Emigration lists ten causes[2] that made the Danes bid farewell to their homeland and seek new homes in the United States. Above we have already referred to the part played by Holland, the West Indies, etc. in bringing the early, minor emigration. But during the nineteenth century new causes drove men away from home surroundings into the unknown of far off America. Among these

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1. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 49.
2. Ibid., Dansk Udvandring, 13.

the most important were probably the religious awakening in Denmark during the nineteenth century, the California gold rush since 1849, Mormon missionary propaganda since 1850 and the Schleswig wars of 1848-50 and 1864.

Though Denmark gave more of her people to America in the immigrations of the early nineteenth century than the other Scandinavian countries, her later quota has never been proportionately as large. There were certain reasons for this; Denmark's geography, her social structure and economic situation. Still Denmark, in spite of her smallness, gave a great number of her sons and daughters to become empire builders, as the great American nation pushed westward.

It must be remembered that geographically the United States is 200 times the size of Denmark, while her population is six times as dense as that of the United States.[1] While emigration often served as an outlet and relief to overcrowded areas in Denmark, the stream of Danish blood and energy added strength, sturdiness and thrift to a good many American communities. Each Scandinavian country, with its particular characteristics, sent its own types of men and women to America.[2] From the pleasant lowlands of Denmark came usually the healthy, often somewhat happy-go-lucky farmer lad, ready to tackle any task in country or city wherever he came to seek his new home. That they did not come in larger numbers was due to the conservative nature of the Dane; but chiefly, probably, to the fact

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1. Danske i Amerika II, 5.
2. Babcock, K. C., op. cit., 16.

that there was no special economic cause for emigration. During the nineteenth century the conditions of the common people steadily improved. We are told that before the end of the century six-sevenths of the land was owned by peasants rather than the nobility. Through the increasing improvements in agricultural methods the productive powers increased tenfold. Agricultural prosperity was the result.[1] There were sections and classes in Denmark however, where these blessings were not shared. The laboring classes of Denmark, in every part of the country, faced a hard life. As might be expected, many from these classes sought better conditions in America. The appalling differences between the wage scales of the two countries became a temptation to many, though the increased cost of living in America was overlooked. When in 1873 blacksmiths and carpenters in Denmark were drawing sixy-five to eighty-five cents per day, their brothers across the ocean, especially in the Middle West, received from $2.66 to $3.00 a day, with shorter hours. Even farm laborers, in spite of the agricultural prosperity of Denmark, sought the larger opportunities in America. In 1872 the ordinary farm hand received from forty cents to fifty-four cents and board a day, while his friend or brother who had gone to Minnesota or Iowa was earning from sventy-five cents to $1.60 per day, as well as board.[2] To go to America usually suggested the possibility of becoming rich.

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1. Babcock, K. C., op. cit., 62-3.
2. Ibid, 85; quoting Dr. Young, Labor in Europe and America.

True, many of the first Danish, as well as other Scandinavian immigrants, labored hard in the great railroad building era. But many found their fortunes when they secured land from the railroad companies, often in the finest of farming districts. The gain, however, was not all theirs. No, they too were doubly valuable to the country, first as laborers and wage-earners and later as independent farmers in the townships made accessible by the railroads they had helped to build.

The Danish authorities objected to the increasing emigration. Through newspaper propaganda the government sought to ridicule emigration when it began to realize the danger of losing the most enterprising classes, while the clergy condemned emigration as a sin against the Fourth (or Fifth) Commandment.[1]

The tide of progress and emigration, however, could not be halted. With the general improvement in economic conditions there was a rapid increase in population. The constitutional struggle which began in 1849[2] brought with it demands for larger independence, which in turn led to a strong labor movement. The opposition launched by the state against emigration naturally enjoyed the support of the state church. This was directly responsible for the fact that many laborers lost faith and interest in the church, a situation that must be kept in mind as we follow the Danish emigrant to America, where, unfortunately, he has too frequently been lost to the

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1. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., I, 46.
2. Ibid., 61.

church. Country and city-laborers alike came to look upon the church with suspicion and experienced no longing for its ministry when they settled in their new homes, amidst new properity and independence.[1]

Another factor which affected the situation in its social, economic and religious phases, was the influx of eighteenth century French philosophy into Denmark. Social, economic and religious reforms were demanded and supported by Danish poets, as for instance Jens Baggesen. N. F. S. Grundtvig was dreaming of better days for every Dane "when few would have too much, and less would have too little."[2] During the early part of the nineteenth century, we have noticed how some pastors tried to adjust religious progress to modern thought. Other pastors and laymen arose in opposition, speaking loudly against the "fallen pastors." Among the laymen there started an independent movement, which was opposed by the government without avail. The whole unrest, finding spiritual and emotional outlet in the Inner Mission and Grundtvigian movements also created a good deal of anti-church feeling. Those who had thus become alienated from the church often found it easier to leave the homeland and naturally cared nothing for the Danish church when they had settled in America.

When the American government began to bid for immigrants by offering homesteads, easy citizenship, etc., some of the churches also began to encourage emigration, indirectly

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1. Christensen, T. C., op. cit., 41.
2. Ibid., 40.

at least. While this may not be directly related to our problem, it was of great importance and concern to the Danish Lutheran church that the Mormon church especially made great use of this type of propaganda.[1] It is significant that, as far as religious motive is concerned, the Mormons gave the first great impetus to heavy Danish emigration. In 1850 the first four Mormon missionaries came to Denmark. Among these was a Dane, P. O. Hansen, who translated the Book of Mormon into Danish. Their strong appeal to "go home to Zion", i.e., Salt Lake City, drew many Danes to America, most of whom were forever lost to Danish Lutheranism.[2] From 1875-83 the Mormon emigration from Denmark reached its peak. In those eight years 975 Danish Mormons left for America which meant that about every twenty-second Danish emigrant was a Mormon. By 1890, Professor Vig estimates there were approximately 16,858 Danes, American and Danish born, in Utah. The real total, however, he suggests likely approached the 22,000 mark. The Mormon missionaries appealed especially to those who had broken with the Lutheran state church. They helped through perpetual emigration funds. With new hope and great enthusiasm these converts set their faces toward the new Zion. After long, tedious journeys and often hardships untold many arrived in the land of promise, disillusioned in spirit, broken in spiritual and physical strength. A few found their way back into the Danish Lutheran church when it began its work among

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1. Christensen, T. C., op. cit., 43.
2. Vig, P. S., Dansk i Amerika, 8 ff.

the Mormons - a mission which never received the whole-hearted support of the Danish Lutherans in America. So while the Mormon emigrants did not add materially to the ranks of the Danish Lutherans in America they did force upon the church a problem which proved to be a difficult one.[1]

The political situation in the Slesvig province caused a great many of the resident Danes to choose America in preference to Prussianism. The Slesvig emigrations started before the Mormon propaganda had begun to stir Denmark. Immediately after the war of 1848-50 about 210 Danes left Slesvig to seek political and religious liberty in America.[2] Many of these Slesvigers settled around Davenport and Cedar Falls, Iowa. But the Danes did not emigrate in large numbers from Slesvig until after 1864 when Prussianism took over the province up to King's river.[3] These emigrants established some of the early settlements of Danish colonies in New York, Illinois, Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska and California. From 1867-1871, we are told, 1608 North Slesvigers immigrated into the United States while during the seventies and eighties the same small province gave up still larger numbers of her sons and daughters.[4]

Some writers lay great emphasis on the literature that influenced men and women to leave Denmark for America.

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1. Vig, P. S., Dansk Lutherask Mission i Amerika, 271.
2. Ibid, Dansk Udvandring, 45.
3. Kange Aaen.
4. Christensen, T. C., op. cit., 50.

While undoubtedly some individuals here and there could be said to have made their decision upon reading a certain book or pamphlet about American conditions and life, the great majority of those who left for America did little reading, before or after changing their spheres of labor. Little was known about America in general or any state or city in particular, except that it was a land of better opportunity where a man, perhaps might become rich. Religion in the majority of cases, played no deciding part. Those who were antagonistic to the church usually remained so in their new environment where no special efforts were put forth by their own countrymen to change their opinions. Those who were indifferent remained indifferent; and those who loved the church at home were the ones who put forth noble efforts to plant the church of the homeland in their own settlements at least. But whatever the influence of propaganda literature, it cannot be pushed aside with the remark, that it was of no consequence whatever.

Pamphlets and correspondence which compared American and Danish conditions created an "American enthusiasm", which by no means lessened as it was passed on by word of mouth and grew to become tales of wonderful adventure and wealth.[1] American authors were translated into Danish. But most influential of all were the letters to friends at home, not the long, melancholy kind, telling of homesickness or painting the hard conditions of pioneer life; but brief, cheery letters,

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1. Christensen, T. C., op. cit., 50.

telling about the good pay, plenty of food, and comfortable life. Often they abounded with advice as to where to sail from and to what places to go. There was nothing aesthetic nor beautiful about them; the spelling and style were poor; but they told the true story of American life with its advantages and privileges, undreamed of by the average laborer in Denmark. These epistles of good cheer were passed on from acquaintance to acquaintance, thus influencing an individual here and there to break with the past and to face a future, unknown but promising, in the far west.[1] Here and there articles appeared in newspapers by individuals who had lived in America. Some even burst forth in song about the fabulous riches in the United States, her rich land, or golden California. In 1847 a Laurits Jacob Fribert published the first "Guide to Danish Emigrants. Individuals had gone, but no steady stream was as yet pouring forth from the little kingdom. There was little intelligent understanding of America. Even after the middle of the nineteenth century when the real emigration began "America" to most Danes meant Wisconsin (Visconsin). A little later it was extended to Iowa (Yova), Nebraska, especially Omaha, and the Dakotas. For "gold-seekers" America was synonymous with California, to the Mormons it was Utah.[2]

Even earlier than this, between 1826-40, J. F. Cooper's works appeared in Danish translation by various writers. They were published in 117 pamphlets and aroused a great deal of

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1. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 52.
2. Ibid., 12.

interest in America, influencing some to desire to see the land of adventures. The famous story of "Uncle Tome's Cabin" became a household theme all throughout Denmark also. Between 1853-5 Bancroft's History of the United States appeared, translated by the Danish navigation officer C. H.Wulff, who died at Beaufort South Carolina, in 1856.[1]

Little was done by Danish Lutherans in America to encourage their fellow believers to come to America at this early date. About the time when Fribert published his Guide to Emigrants letters, appeals began to appear from the pen of a faithful Danish Lutheran pastor, Rev. C. L. Clausen[2], who was affiliated with the Norwegian Lutheran church and active among the Danes in Wisconsin.[3]

In 1852 a lay-preacher, Rasmus Sorensen, came to this country. He left Denmark after he became a convert to the Grundtvigian principle, but at the same time he opposed the extreme nationalism among this group of Lutherans and therefore emigrated to Wisconsin where he became a teacher among his countrymen. Through a number of pamphlets he appealed to Danish farmers and skilled laborers to come to America. At the same time he kept himself busy as a lay-preacher and acted as an immigration agent among his own people.

From among the Danish authors who wrote about the United States Dr. P. S. Vig lists forty-seven outstanding

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1. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 54.
2. See below, p. 70
3. Christensen, T. C., op. cit., 50.

works.[1] Among the most important, as far as our interests are concerned, we must mention the Travellogues from America, published by the Rev. Grove-Rasmussen, who was one of the representatives of the Committee[2] sent to America in 1871 to study the field of the Danish Lutheran church. These travellogues were published in Nordisk Maanedsskrift and probably interested numerous men and women who later became affiliated with the Danish church in America. As we look back to the beginnings of the Danish Lutheran church in America it would be hard to overestimate the importance of letters and articles from men actively engaged in laying the foundation of the Danish church in America. From the pen of the Rev. Holger Rosenstand came a pamphlet From the Region of the Great Lakes. Rosenstand served as Danish pastor from 1872-78 first in Manistee, Michigan and later in Dwight, Illinois. In his pamphlet he especially described the congregational life among the Danish Lutherans. R. Andersen[3] also a member of the committee which came to this country to study the church situation, has since 1871 and to this day been active in writing about the Danish Lutherans in America. The first booklet he produced was the Immigrant Mis-Mission[4] in 1889 which throughout many years has been a guide and help and inspiration to Danish immigrants. Again many articles appeared in Danish Folk High School papers, in the

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1. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 54-62.
2. Udvalget.
3. See below, p. 92
4. Emigrantmission.

Norse Monthly, the Historical Monthly and "Danskeren". Another form of propaganda carried on in Denmark was by means of the lecture platform where glowing accounts were given of the opportunities open in America.

Before we take up the study of the organizing work among Danish Lutherans it is well that we should get a picture of the Dane that came to this country. What were the characteristics of these sons and daughters of Denmark and how did they react to the appeal from the church; and again how did the church appeal to them and what was its success? After answering these questions we shall be ready to turn to the study of the Danish Lutheran Church in America.

Native Americans have never been noted for their cordiality to immigrants though they were sincerely wanted because of their economic value. In reaction to this the foreigner naturally becomes clannish and seeks to make life in America as much as possible like life at home.[1] Often - one dare almost say - usually, the immigrants have gone where the native American did not care to go. Into the forest lands of the Middle Western and northern states and far out into the rolling prairies of Nebraska and the Dakotas the Scandinavians drove their stakes and built their huts. And here, in the West and the Northwest, they became "hewers of wood and drawers of water." Among these Scandinavian settlers the Dane carried his load, though in numbers he was far outstripped by his northern brother.

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1. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., I, 68.
2. Steiner, E. A., On the Trail of the Immigrant, see Introduction.

The great majority of the immigrants were laborers, skilled and unskilled, with a sprinkling of small farmers. Among the earliest arrivals there was only an insignificant number of landowners, doctors, lawyers, ministers, teachers and artists. But they came with the willingness and determination to work and make good.[1] Their standard of living, usually of the best kind morally, did not differ economically much from their American frontier neighbor. Life could not vary much in a sod-house on the prairie, in a cabin on a claim, or in a log hut in a clearing, whether the occupant happened to be of Viking or Puritan descent. Their food was Indian corn, sometimes ground in a coffee-mill, occasbnally wheat, milk, fish, wild fowl, pork and common vegetables; their clothing was usually primitive and always rough; and in the early days at least "men in wooden shoes and home-made woolen jackets were no uncommon sights at their religious meetings, or even when they were locked in holy matrimony before the altar."[2]

Out on the frontier these humble Danes fought to push forward the borders of the United States. They sought no honors and no honors were bestowed upon them. Nelson contends that the Danish Americans, in proportion to their numbers, have produced only one-third as much literary matter as their kindred folks.[3] But we must remember that hard labor and

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1. Christensen, T. C., op. cit., 54.
2. Babcock, K. C., op. cit., 101.
3. Nelson, O. N., I, 40.

difficult economic conditions do not exactly help in the production of literature. And it would be but fair to say that as to the literary accomplishments among the other Scandinavians and the Danes the difference is mainly in quantity and not quality.

Babcock says: "The Danish element in America has always lacked unity and solidarity. Even in their European home the Danes have no strong national ambition and no national institution claims their enthusiastic and undivided support."[1] The latter assertion contains a grain of truth. But it must be remembered that during the modern period, when nationalism became crystallized in Europe, Denmark was a comparatively small nation. As stated above, militarism, which unfortunately was the unifying and strengthening force of a great deal of European nationalism, was never present in modern Denmark. There was no need for militarism and this small nation has set a noble example in the progress of disarmament. No strong national program cemented together the emotions and talents of this small, peace-loving nation. But underneath the surface there has always been a deep, proud patriotism but which, unfortunately, found expression in glorifying the great past of Danish accomplishments rather than in finding its source and inspiration in the possibilities of a greater national development. The story of Danish Lutheranism has always reflected that love for things Danish. But transplanted to American

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1. Babcock, K. C., op. cit., 64.

soil by certain groups such devotion often proved a hindrance to the growth of the church. Neither was this patriotism able to overcome the lack of unity among the Danes, to which Babcock refers. Numerically the Danes have never been strong or even in the majority in any given community, with the exception of one or two places, as we shall show later. Scattered far and wide throughout the vastness of this continent solidarity was impossible, especially in the early days of Danish immigration. When toward the last quarter of the nineteenth century the stream of Danes pouring into America was at its highest, it must be remembered that a great many sought the rapidly growing cities, where the majority of Danes were rapidly Americanized in the inevitable nationalizing process. They were not simply lost to the Danish elements, but unfortunately too many were lost to the church when the Danish Lutheran church failed to keep abreast with the nationalizing process. Yet again all the blame must not be put at the doors of the church. Says Nelson: "The deficiency of the Danes in this respect is, without question, chiefly due to indifference of the people in regard to the supernatural."[1] We have pointed out above the religious problems in Denmark that had helped to alienate a good many of the laboring classes from the church. However, not every Dane that came to America, was an enemy of the church. Why then did the church not succeed in gathering in more of its spiritual children here in America? One of the

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1. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., II, 50.

answers undoubtedly, as we face the actual situation, must be found in the lack of leadership. Nelson observes that lack of leadership was responsible for the failure of gathering into the Danish Lutheran Church a larger number of their countrymen.

> Excepting Rev. C. L. Clausen, whose life work was almost wholly devoted to the Norwegians, there have not been any successful leaders among the Danish American Lutheran clergymen. They have had both learned and devoted pastors. But none has combined those rare qualities of piety and adroitness, of conservatism and firmness, which distinguished a Hasselquist[1] and a Preus[2] and enabled them to manage wisely and act nobly.[3]

The fact, that in comparison with other Scandinavians fewer Danes became affiliated with their own church would substantiate the above assertion. Over one-third of all the Scandinavians in the United States, claimed Nelson in 1897, were members of some church and almost three-fourths were regular church goers. But only in the neighborhood of 20,000 Danes were members of Purely Danish Protestant organizations.[4] To these Nelson added 10,000 more who could reasonably be supposed to have religiously associated themselves with some other churches, Lutheran and otherwise. Estimating the total number of Danes and their descendants in America at 350,000 in 1897, which is a conservative estimate, only one out of 12 was then a church member.[5]

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1. Hasselquist, T. N., The Augustana Synod, 10, 22 ff., see also other members of the Hasselquist family.
2. Preus, Rev. A.C., see Rohne, J. N., op. cit., 158-62, also Preus, H. A., op. cit., 213 ff.
3. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., II, 50.
4. This includes Danish Baptists, et al.
5. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., II, 42. Babcock in his study says: As against the Norwegian total of 800,000 from 1820-1905, the Danish is only about 250,000. (This does not include the Slesvig immigrants), op. cit., 62.

That this problem should affect the whole church in its financial and educational program is self-evident. Outside of the church circles and sad enough, also within the church, largely because of its far scattered constituency, there has been no whole-hearted support of the common projects of the church, nor of its educational institutions. Consequently only small things have been accomplished.

The small number of immigrants is no sufficient reason for the comparative smallness of church membership within the Danish Lutheran churches in America today. Other nationalities have been more successful under the same conditions. When one considers the smallness of the country, the Danes have excelled some of their neighbors in the grandeur and richness of their literature, as well as art. But they seldom seem to have distinguished themselves as leaders of men, either military or otherwise. Nor have they been especially noted for their pietistic bent of mind, except in limited circles; yet, they have never been professed infidels, nor have they been extremists in their virtues or in their vices. Speaking strictly from the point of view of the church two reasons seem to stand out, each of which has had its effect upon a definite group among the Danish Lutherans: (1) the apparent absence of enthusiastic and aggressive leaders within the church, who were able to lift themselves above petty quibbling and differences in theological adiophora, to successfully harness all the man power and financial resources among Danish Lutherans; (2) the effect of a compromising and often extremely modern theological view among its

clergy which was neither understood nor wanted by the masses. These, we regard as having been the chief hindrances in the building of a greater and more numerous Danish Lutheran church on the Western continent.[1]

Lack of patriotism cannot be said to be the cause for not enlisting larger numbers in the service of the church. Within as well as outside the church social organizations have come into existence as a result of the patriotic motive. Among these should be mentioned such as the "Dana", the "Danish Lutheran Brotherhood," and the "Society for Danish Folk."[2] The most enthusiastic leaders within these groups were often Slesviger Danes, who, because of German antipathies, had come to nurture a deep and enthusiastic love for Denmark. But frequently there was no corresponding love for the religion and church of the fatherland they were longing for. Babcock in speaking of this failure of the Danish church to draw within its folds her own children says that

> the Danish church, or churches, has gripped its immigrant sons and daughters less closely than similar organizations among the Swedes and Norwegians. It is estimated that only about one out of fifteen of the Danes in the United States belongs to some church[3]

(not necessarily the Lutheran). The same author also comes to the conclusion after careful comparison of statistics that among the Swedes one out of five, and among the Norwegians one out of every three and one-half belonged to the church toward

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1. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., II, 41.
2. Dansk Folkesamfundet
3. Babcock, K. C., op. cit., 64.

the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

Another reason for the failure to reach more of the Danish immigrants must be sought in the fact that toward the end of the eighties and the beginning years of the nineties, when immigration was heavy, there was no possibility for real united effort through the church. Says Bille on this point:

> One reason for the low ebb of church influence among the Danes is undoubbedly the wsanglings of the clergy over matters of theology and politics, a continuation of the factional differences between the followers of Grundtvig and the anti-Grundtvigian or Inner Mission people in the years 1894-5.[1]

Under the new American conditions, removed from the unifying force of the state church, cooperation of the two schools could not be maintained. Strenuous efforts were made. Early in its history the Danish Church adopted the following resolution: "We, the Danish ministers and congregations, hereby declare ourselves to be a branch of the Danish National Church, a missionary department, established by that church in America."[2] In spite of such efforts disagreements and separation came. But even after the schism the two new organizations remained in very close relation to the church in the homeland which made impossible the development of an independent, aggressive spirit, the secret of progress in other foreign churches in America. The Danish Lutherans have never broken the home-ties in the sense that the Germans did even in the days of H.M.Mühlenberg.[3]

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1. Bille, J. H., op. cit.
2. Kirkelig Samler, p. 2.
3. Wentz, A. R., op. cit., 73 ff.

Practically throughout its whole history the Danish Church has received financial help, insignificant though it generally has been, from the Danish government through the state church.[1] Through this intimate relation with the home church the Danish Lutherans have been trying to keep alive Danish tradition and also to direct into this country the streams of Danish cultural as well as spiritual life. Noble though this purpose was and is to this day, little has been accomplished in the past, as the church has failed to translate these contributions into the thought, life and activities of Americans, even of their own race. Probably the Danish Lutheran churches have hindered, in the best sense of that word, the progress of nationalizing and Americanizing. Until very recently and in many instances even now, a great number of the Danish Lutheran clergymen, devoted and capable as they have been, have not been able to handle the English language. With ardent love for and devotion to cultural and educational institutions of his spiritual and intellectual background, he has failed to see that these could only bring their contribution to Danish-American Lutheranism as they adjusted themselves to an American social, intellectual and religious order instead of standing aloof in an attempt to retain purely Danish characteristics.

It has been pointed out above that, not counting the Danish Mormons, the greater bulk of Danish immigrants settled in the middle western states, such as Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, etc. And it was here that the first Danish Lutheran

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1. Babcock, K. C., op. cit., 64.

congregations were organized as a rule by lay-missionaries.[1] About 1847 the first Danish settlers began to move into the neighborhood of Hartland, Wisconsin. Three years later a larger group of immigrants arrived from the Danish island of Langeland and settled what became known as New Denmark, Wisconsin. As the tide of Danes continued to swell they began to move out into the open prairie country. By 1870 there were approximately 35,000 Danish farmer settlers.[2] Quite a number also found their way into the cities where they were usually lost to the church as they drifted here and there. The hope and stay of the church was the thrifty farmer who had his start in the log house or sod hut. Theirs was not a life of ease. In the heat of the summer they labored hard, often to reap nothing but failure, facing the long hard winter with little to cheer them but the mere necessities of life; with no comforts except the spiritual comfort they might receive in the nearby schoolhouse or the neighbor's cabin, when, once a month, or even less frequently, the pastor came to direct their attention to the life to come, with its peace, joy and abundance. Not all sought encouragement even here. Many had been day laborers and farm hands at home with little hope for the future. They often hated the hard life and, to them, the unfriendly land they had left behind. For them their new home was all gain, though hard work was the price also. It was a price not paid in vain. For in many cases prosperity came even if at a very

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1. Vig, P. S., Dansk Lutherak Mission i Amerika, 13.
2. Den Danske Kirke, 5.

slow pace. That men and women with such experience should soon learn English and forget the Danish is not remarkable. Often the Danish church had no message for them. As they drank the new wine of democracy they looked also for a church with a more democratic spirit and message than the church they remembered from their childhood days.

Others loved the church. They longed for its message and ministration. Along with their love for the land of their childhood they continued to manifest a love for the religion and message of their own Lutheran church.[1] Both of the movements of the new religious awakening had their disciples, some leaning toward the Inner Mission emphasis, others toward the Grundtvigian. Among the latter were a good many who had been influenced by the inspiration of the Danish Folk High School of Grundtvigian origin. When the church began its work it came at the request of either the one or the other of these two Danish groups. As they settled in the various communities to build their future homes they remembered the old white church of the lovely Danish countryside where they had been baptized and confirmed; or where they had communed or had given their vows of marriage at the altar. It held sacred memories. So they hoped to transplant that church to the soil of their new home that around it their children might build their lives and plant their memories. How was it to be done; that was the serious problem. As church folk they had little or no experience

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1. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., I, 62.

in what it meant to run a church and even less in how to finance it. The state had cared for these matters in the homeland where the bills had been paid through taxes, the people having no voice in its management. In the new home there was no church to meet them, greet or cheer them in hours of trial and sorrow. If they desired the blessings of the church it became their own burden to make them possible. The lesson was not easily or always readily learned. Here and there the pioneers gathered to read sermons and hold prayers from books which some devoted soul had brought from home. In the early summer of 1869, for instance, the first three families in West Denmark gathered every Sunday in the simple huts, hidden by the forests, along the lake side.[1] Thus here and in a similar way in other places the foundation was laid for Danish Lutheran congregations. As the settlements grew it often happened that strong individuals would rule a community, not always to the best advantage of the church. Thus a man by the name of Hans Godtfredsen was often spoken of as the "king of New Denmark". A man who accidentally began the Elk Horn, Iowa, Danish settlement, Christian Jensen, was known as "king of the Danes."[2]

It was no glorious road, nor a battleless future that faced the Lutheran church as it began to minister to the sons and daughters of Denmark. In America it suffered indifference from the great masses. Many of its own countrymen looked upon it wish suspicion and heaped upon it negative criticism through

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1. Den Danske Kirke, 7.
2. Vig, P. S., Dansk Udvandring, 88.

word, action and press. From the homeland the Danish infant church, inspite of its intimate, official relation, was given to understand that it did not stand on equal footing with the mother church and its clergy. A great deal of haughty "offishness" was manifested by the ecclesiastical leaders of the national church. "But in spite of this," says Dr. Vig, "the Danish Lutheran Free Church in America is more than an experiment; it is a happy reality, which, we hope, in days to come, will grow in importance in its relation to and influence upon the mother church."[1] The nature of the leaders as well as the characteristics of the pioneers of the Danish Lutheran church demanded and gave to the church a very conservative basis which has not been consistently followed throughout its history. While the Danish church has drifted from the early conservative moorings the United Church has bolstered them up and almost become "Missourian"[2] in its theological position. May we again quote Vig, who likes to strike a polemic note. He says: "While things Lutheran in Denmark, as far as one can judge from the distance, is more and more becoming an individual 'something', which everyone can interpret after his own pleasure, we Danes in America have thought it well to rally around 'God's Word and Luther's teachings,' in opposition to the many and strange teachings and doctrines, which here (in America) stretch forth their hands to us and invite us to brotherhood and

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1. Vig, P. S., Dansk Udvandring, 8.
2. Refers to the position of the Lutheran Synod of Missouri and other states.

cooperation, no one knows with what."[1] From the church point of view, there came to these shores then at least two distinct groups of Danish immigrants. The first group, and probably by far the largest, were those who left Denmark to seek and build a new home. They usually left because they were dissatisfied with existing economic conditions, often discouraged and broken in spirit. In such a state of mind they found little help in the average state church and its officious pastors. But among these there were also those who had found new life in the Inner Mission movement. They as a rule made good material for future congregations in America, though a good many were eccentric, exceedingly narrow and individualistic in their religious outlook. Such attitude of mind offered little attraction to those who sought a new beginning of life economically and socially. The other groups was smaller, at least as it actually came into living contact with the church. Most of the pastors of this group came as "missionaries", some with an idea of remaining here and making America their future home. They came with the honest conviction that Denmark and the Danish church had definite spiritual and cultural contributions to give to American life. So they purposed to perpetuate Danish life and thought in the land of their adoption. As a rule these pastors labored in the Danish Church.

We have seen the material out of which and the conditions under which the Danish Lutheran Church made its beginning.

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1. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 9.

In the next place it might be well to get more of a definite idea in regard to the numerical strength of the Danes in America.

During the first years of government records in regard to immigration the Danes outnumbered the Swedes and Norwegians who, curiously enough, were listed under one heading. In 1820, when only three Swedes and Norwegian immigrants are listed, the Danish list totals twenty. That this proportion was true previously we have no reasons to believe. But for two decades, following 1820, the Danes held the lead.[1] When the next ten years have passed the Swedes and Norwegians by far outnumbered the Danish immigrants.[2] The heavier Swedish and Norwegian immigrations began in 1833[3] and kept on growing. From 1820 until 1871, the year when the Danish Church was organized, there had come to this country at least 22,634 Danes, but 145,397 Swedes and Norwegians. In regard to the Danes the figures must be regarded low as the Slesviger immigrants are likely not counted, being usually considered as Germans.[4] Though at first a little heavier, Danish immigration soon fell behind and in fact never reached 2000 a year until the year 1869, when 2,649 Danes came to America, according to government statistics. And from that year the total of Danish immigrants hardly ever equals the number of Norwegians, who, beginning

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1. 1831-40, 1,063 Danes, 1,161 Swedes and Norwegians.
2. 1841-50, 539 Danes, 13,902 Swedes and Norwegians.
3. Reports of Immigration Commission, 1911, 18.
4. Vig, P. S., Dansk Lutherak Mission i Amerika, 9.

with the year 1870, are recorded separately from the Swedes.[1] As over against Norway's total of 665,189 immigrants from 1810-1910 and Sweden's 1,021,165, Denmark's total number of immigrants counted only 258,053.[2] Babcock says:

> "In calculating the (Danish) immigration, however, a large allowance must be made. Since the duchies of Slesvig-Holstein were acquired by Prussia in 1864 and 1866 their immigrants have, of course, been recorded as German. But nevertheless, taken as a whole the movement from Denmark has lacked momentum...The influence of the Danes in the United States is much less important than that of either of the other Scandinavian nationalities."[3]

Even where the Danes are strongest they can hardly be called an important factor in any state. In 1914 - and the increase has been negligible since, due to the war and immigration laws - the states of Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois and Nebraska, each had more than 25,000 Danish citizens. Approximately 60% of the Danish immigrants have settled in the west and middle west and here the Danish Lutheran Church laid its central work. Only 28% of the Danes in America live in cities.[4] Thus the strength of the Danish Lutheran churches has always been in the country church of the Middle West. "The Danish Lutherans have 85% of their following in Michigan and westward and 96% of the United (Danish) Church is west of the Ohio," says Mode.[5]

We have viewed the Danish emigrants in their home surroundings and tried to understand the various forces, political,

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1. Reports of Immigration, 28.
2. Ibid.
3. Babcock, op. cit., 62.
4. Babcock, op. cit. Frontier Spirit of American Christianity, 92.

social, religious and others that helped to mold his character and outlook upon life. We have followed him on his journey into the unknown and located with him in the great and promising Middle West. The material that was to make the church was ready. Next then we must see how the church answered the great challenge.

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNING OF THE DANISH WORK IN COOPERATION WITH NORWEGIAN LUTHERANS

A quarter of a century before the Danish Lutherans made any kind of organized effort to establish their church in America, the Norwegian Lutherans attempted to be spiritual neighbors and friends to their Danish brethren in the faith. From insignificant and unorganized efforts the work grew until the Norwegian Lutherans were able to send forth upon its own way an important stream of Danish Lutheranism, endowed with Norwegian zeal and devotion. The personality and spirit which gave life to this movement was Claus Laurits Clausen.[1] A Dane by birth, he, in the course of time, not only became the founder of work among the Danish Lutherans but was also destined to lay the foundation for the strong and active Norwegian Lutheran church in America.

The little Danish island Aeroe[2], which has contributed much to Danish emigration, was the home of this pioneer of Scandinavian Lutheranism in America. Early in life he came under evangelical influences and his conversion was probably hastened through the work of the well-known Peter L. Skraeppenborg. For a while he had strong Baptist leanings; but finally took up theological studies under the provost H. C. Christensen

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1. Rohne, J. M., op. cit., 56 ff.
2. Vig, P. S., Danske I Amerika, 16.

in Bregingo. His interest in Foreign Missions became aroused and in 1841 he went to Norway where he found friends interested in the same work. While here, he volunteered to go to the Zululand of South Africa. This hope did not materialize; so when a call came from America to teach in Nueskego, Wisconsin, he accepted. He first returned to Denmark where he married Martha Rasmussen, also a Dane. Rohne says: "Martha Rasmussen was the first gracious occupant of that spiritual and cultural stronghold in Norwegian (Danish) American church life, the Lutheran parsonage."[1] Her services in America were short. She died in 1846 the first Norwegian-Danish American Lutheran pastor's wife to offer up her life in deeply devoted service to her church and countrymen in America. As a parting farewell, she gave to the church the beautiful Danish hymn: 'And now we must bid one another farewell.'[2]

In 1843, at the age of twenty-three, C. L. Clausen arrived in America, still only a lay preacher, much under the influence of Grundtvigian thought.[3] He at once went to work teaching and preaching to the scattered Norwegians and Danes alike. In order to receive proper recognition he began to look for ordination. After being examined by some German clergymen he was ordained on October 18, 1843, at Nueskego, Wisconsin, by the German Lutheran pastor, the Rev. E. F. E. Krause.[4] To C. L. Clausen, therefore, falls the honor of being the first

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1. Rohne, J. M., op. cit., 60.
2. Translated into English.
3. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 18.
4. Andersen, R., Pastor C. L. Clausen, 64.

Danish Lutheran pastor to receive ordination in America and also of having organized what is generally supposed to be the first Scandinavian Lutheran Church[1] in the United States, since the Swedish settlements on the Delaware.[2] Though he was located among the Norwegians he also began to gather the Danish Lutherans into congregations in Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota.

In January, 1851, he was one of the leaders, together with C. C. Preus and H. C. Stub, in founding the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America.[3] The meeting took place in Clausen's church at Luther Valley, Rock Prairie, Wisconsin, where he was elected the first "Superintendent" of churches. In 1852 Clausen moved to St. Ansgar, Iowa, which in fact was founded by him.[4] When Danish Lutherans began to move in here he showed his interest in them and finally organized a strong Lutheran congregation in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Along with his organizing efforts among Norwegians and Danes, Clausen found time to manifest active interest in political and national life. At the outbreak of the Civil War he enlisted in the famous Fifteenth Wisconsin Regiment,[5] in which he was the only Danish Lutheran chaplain.[6] Not until poor health compelled him, did he resign this post of honor, in 1872. Long before this, from 1856-7, Clausen was the first Scandinavian

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1. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 18-20.
2. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., Vol. I, 184, claims that Eilsen had built a log meeting house at Fox River, Ill, 3 or 4 years earlier.
3. Rohne, Op. cit.,
4. Andersen, R., op. cit., 131.
5. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., Vol. II, 365 ff.
6. Andersen, R., op. cit., 141.

who occupied a seat in the Iowa legislature.[1]

C. L. Clausen's deep and constructive interest in the Danish Lutherans was shown when, on a visit in Denmark in 1866, he advocated that separate mission work, apart from the Norwegian, be begun among the Danes in America. It is of interest that the same year the Episcopal Bishop Whitehouse of Chicago had been in Denmark to advocate intercommunion and to seek a Danish candidate for America, to work under the auspices of the Episcopal Church.[2] Though his attempt failed, it indirectly furthered the appeals made by C. L. Clausen. He arrived at an agreement with the Rev. J. Clausen of Denmark that the latter should espouse the Danish Mission in America through the channels of the Inner Mission work in Denmark. In America C. L. Clausen was to stir the interests of the Danes. In case no ordained man could be secured - and that problem seemed to be prominent - C. L. Clausen was instructed to ordain a man in America. After his return to America he continued his propaganda in the homeland through magazine articles. Thus there appeared in the February 15, 1868, issue of the Kirkeligt Maanedsblad an article on the "Danes in North America."[3] In this he spoke of three hundred families of Danes in Chicago and deplored that so many Danes had to seek spiritual care in Norwegian and Swedish churches. But more serious still to him was the fact that a great number of these Danes were leaving

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1. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., Vol. II, 69.
2. Andersen, R., op. cit., 142.
3. Ibid., 143.

these churches because of the continual theological bickering among the Scandinavian Lutherans. It must be kept in mind that Clausen was greatly influenced by Grundtvig and found little satisfaction in the theological controversies in the Norwegian church. Another danger that was facing the Danish Lutherans, as Clausen pointed out in his correspondence, was the fact that many were going into Baptist and Methodist churches. Everywhere there was a crying need for Danish Lutheran pastors. In Milwaukee they were anxious for a resident pastor. From New Denmark, Wisconsin, where, according to Clausen, there were about 1200 Danes, they were calling for a Lutheran pastor. Neenah, Wisconsin, and surroundings, with more than 1000 Danes, many of whom were from Slesvig, appealed to him for help. In his letter he frankly showed that the Norwegians, Swedes and Germans were attempting to care for their spiritual children in America. But he wrote: "Only the Danish folks in America, as such, seem to have no future, but must early disappear without traces, and this, I believe, it to a large extent the fault of the Danish Folk Church, which so far has forgotten and neglected her brethren and sisters in the faith...But though much is lost, much, yes, very much, can still be done..."[1] He urged the Inner Mission to help, making the somewhat unique request, that no Grundtvigian pastors be sent, though he himself was one. The strict Lutheran tendencies among the Swedish and Norwegian Lutherans, he likely felt, would make difficult the work of

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1. Andersen, R., op. cit., 150.

Grundtvigian pastors among Danes, who, so to speak, now were the spiritual heirs of Norwegian or Swedish Lutheranism.

The national problem which rent asunder the great American churches, and which, for a moment, seemed to threaten the very life of the nation, slavery, was not without its echo among the Norwegian Lutherans. In 1862 the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Synod had passed a somewhat ambiguous slavery resolution, signed by C. L. Clausen and other ministers. But Clausen soon repented of his stand and publicly withdrew his consent. Inasmuch as this called forth a great deal of criticism, he decided to leave the Synod in 1868.[1] In regard to this the Reverend Mr. J. Mueller-Eggen[2] of Racine, Wisconsin, wrote: "The Wisconsin Synod[3] (Norwegian) drove out the old, honorable...Danish-born pastor, Clausen, from the Synod a few months ago because he taught that slavery was sin, and called this his teaching devilish, false and soul-destroying; Clausen has now come into friendly relation with our Synod."[4] This same Reverend Mueller-Eggen was at this time also carrying on correspondence with V. Beck,[5] then head of the Inner Mission movement in Denmark, about a possible cooperation in behalf of Danish Mission work in America. The efforts of these two pastors of the Norwegian Lutheran church, along with other things, had their effect upon the church at home. At its first meeting

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1. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., Vol. I, 368.
2. Inner Missions Tidende, February 15, 1868.
3. Rohne, J. M., op. cit., 39. Mueller-Eggen belonged to the Augustana (Norwegian) Synod.
4. Andersen, R., op. cit., 162-3.
5. See above page 25

in 1869 the "Church Society of Fyen"[1] passed a resolution about sending "believing men to America." At its second meeting, June 2, 1869, in Svendborg their first candidate for a pastorate in America, R. Andersen, was accepted and entered the Folk High School at Ryslinge, Denmark. When they met for the third time that year, in October, it was largely through the influence of C. L. Clausen's letters that the Reverend Mr. Johan Clausen moved that a Committee[2] of five members be elected to sponsor the Danish Mission in America.

In the meantime the difference within the Norwegian Lutheran Church, already referred to, became more keenly felt. While other causes helped to widen the gap there can be no doubt that doctrinal controversy on justification, within the Norwegian Lutheran Church hastened the final withdrawal of a group of pastors from that synod. Two years after Clausen had withdrawn, he became the leader in organizing the Conference for the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which accepted the Symbolical Books of both the Norwegian and Danish Lutheran Churches.[3]

This marked the beginning of a new era in the life of Danish Lutheranism in America. New hope was manifested as Rev. J. Mueller-Eggen and others continued to work faithfully for the Danish Mission and through his personal influence S. C.

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1. Kirkelig Forening for Fyen's Stift.
2. "Udvalget" it is called to this day. Will be referred to as The Committee.
3. Rohne, J. M., op. cit., 235 ff., also Andersen, R., Evangelical Lutheran Kirke Historie, 625 ff.

Madsen entered the seminary of the new organization.[1] Clausen secured a Reverend N. Thomsen, a former missionary to India, for the Danish work in Amerien. He located in Indianapolis, where he became pastor of a Danish Lutheran congregation, without synodical affiliation.[2] After fifty years of faithful service to Norwegians and Danes alike C. L. Clausen died in 1892 at Paulsbo, Washington.[3] Though working among the Norwegians he had constantly been interested in the spiritual welfare of the Danes.

It should be remembered that before any Danish church was organized, Norwegian pastors of the Synod as well as of the Conference cared for the spiritual welfare of the American-Danes. When the Danish work began to be organized independently of the Norwegian Lutherans[4], they, at first gladly, turned the Danish congregation over to the new pastors who came through The Committee directly from Denmark. But when Grundtvigian tendencies became prominent within the Danish Church now organized the conservative Norwegian and Danish pastors began to oppose it vigorously.[5] Writing of the work done by Norwegians for

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1. Andersen, R., C. L. Clausen, 160.
2. At this very time The Committee in Denmark, which had come into existence largely through the influence of Clausen, sent its first three representatives to America to study the conditions of the Danish Lutherans. But strange enough the Mission that was organized as a result of this visit, had little or nothing to do with the work among the Danes, sponsored by Clausen. In fact the church which grew out of this new Mission, the Danish Church, was not often on friendly terms with the Danish Lutherans who were affiliated with the Norwegians.
3. Vig, P. S., Danske i Amerika, 23.
4. The Danish Lutheran Church. See below page 76
5. Vig, P. S., Dansk Lutherske Mission i Amerika, 105.

the Danish Lutherans Rev. Mr. Hejberg of the Danish Church says: "The first ones who cared for the spiritual needs of our people were the Norwegian Lutheran pastors - and for that we thank them - Along with their own work they could do no more... but whatever they accomplished they did in good faith and with an honest desire to help their brother-people in spiritual need."[1] But then the article goes on to attack the Norwegian Conference for further interfering with the Danish work while V. Beck is also criticized for sending young men to the Conference seminary. The two church movements of Denmark are now at work in America, the Inner Mission through the Norwegian Danish Conference and the Grundtvigians through the Danish Church. While all the pastors of the Danish Church were not Grundtvigians that influence was sufficient to make impossible any cooperation.

In Denmark, in the meanwhile, the Reverend Mr. Johan Clausen[2] who had sponsored the organizing of The Committee, secured the cooperation of Beck, on the condition, that he, and another Inner Mission man, be made active members of the Committee. The Reverend Mr. Helveg had criticized Beck for sending Danish candidates to the Norwegian seminary, in reply to which V. Beck wrote: "When that way[3] was closed to Inner Mission men I chose the second, that is, to go by way of the Norwegian

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1. Kirkelig Samler, 1878, 105 ff.
2. See above page 76.
3. That is, the Committee, which was then still in the hands of Grundtvigians.

pastors, where I knew the way was fully open."[1] The result was that the Norwegian Danish Conference would and could not leave the mission among the Danes to pastors of the Danish Church, and the Inner Mission in Denmark was not willing - until Beck joined The Committee - to leave the sending of pastors to America to them. Young men of this tendency, who planned to work among their countrymen in America, therefore, entered the Norwegian Augsburg seminary at Minneapolis. After finishing their studies and receiving ordination they became pastors of the Conference in whose papers and Annual Reports they are spoken of as the "Danish Brethren".[2]

Thus the Danish work in the Norwegian church continued in its own course. Between the years 1872-84 only ten Danes were graduated from the Augsburg Seminary and ordained in the Conference. But among these were such outstanding future leaders as O. M. Andersen, G. B. Christiansen and M. C. Hansen-Rohe. All of these men became pastors in Danish Lutheran parishes, each one serving from four to five congregations. As a rule such congregations were "independent", that is, without synodical affiliation of any kind, a practice that has faced the Danish Lutheran churches through their history. After the establishment of the Danish Church the pastors opposed the men coming from the Norwegian seminary, holding that those who were outside the Danish Church could not be called "Danish" pastors.[3] To them the Danish Church was the only true living

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1. Kirkelig Samler, 1879, 142.
2. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 108.
3. Kirkelig Samler, 1879, 377.

link with the Mother Church in Denmark.

As early as 1875 the Conference advocated a "Danish Mission Committee" which was to supervise work among the Danes and collect money for it. During the following year such a committee became a reality and a year later that committee began to publish its own paper[1], an important step among the Danish Lutherans. A. M. Andersen, who was to assume the leadership of this movement within the Norwegian church, was made chairman of the "Danish Mission Committee" in 1877. The newly established paper, the Danish Lutheran Church Paper,[2] at once became the champion of Danish mission work. It brought accounts of new churches that were being organized in Nebraska and Wisconsin.[3] The task of administering to the far scattered Danes was by no means an easy one; but the response was encouraging. And though little or no money was received from the Norwegians, the contribution from the Danish settlers was sufficient to support the new mission efforts. The Danes also helped to pay the salaries of the theological professors at Augsburg, and at the same time, partly supported needy Danish students there. One source of their devotion must be sought in certain types of personal piety. The problems of conversion and sanctification played an important role in the preaching of this group, often almost bordering on revivalism. Such a spirit was reflected in the paper published by this group.

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1. Dansk Lutherak Kirkeblad - to be referred to as D. L. K. August, 1878.
2. Ibid.
3. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 117.

Chiefly devoted to devotional material it emphasized a personal relation to God and individual piety, while also calling its readers to repentance through an ardent evangelistic note.

When the Danish Lutheran Church Paper was first published there were only four Danish pastors in the Conference: H. Hansen, Omaha; N. Madsen, New Denmark, Wisconsin; H. N. Thorup, Hartland, Wisconsin; and A. M. Andersen, Racine, Wisconsin, but soon M. C. Hansen-Rohe was added by ordination.[1] By the fall of 1878 there were six Danish students at the Augsburg seminary helping the mission through supply work. The work was growing and developing its own consciousness. Danish Lutherans were more numerous and ready for church work in Wisconsin and Nebraska; but the field was not entirely theirs for the Baptists and Methodists were trying to bring spiritual care to these unchurched Danes. The Danish Church claimed them as their birthright although they had so long neglected them. The presence of private missionaries created further complications. Such a one was Missionary Lang who was exceedingly active in Omaha, Fremont, Grand Island, and other places.[2] Not all the pastors of the Danish Church, however, were sworn enemies of the Danish and other pastors among the Norwegians. Some advocated friendly relationship with the Norwegian Lutherans hoping for a possible union. Rev. R. Andersen, a peace loving pastor of the Danish Church, through its official paper[3], proposed that the

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1. Hansen, I. M., Pastor Rohes Mindetavle, 9.
2. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 120.
3. K.S., 1878, 122 ff.

Danish pastors of the Conference be invited to attend the Annual Convention of the Danish Church to be held at Neenah, Wisconsin. But while a few pastors, with him, expressed a desire for cooperation and peace, in articles and poems, the move was in vain. Too many of their fellow-pastors opposed it.[1]

While their own Danish brethren criticized these efforts of gathering the Danish Lutherans together, the Norwegian pastors manifested the kindliest interest and cooperation. Writing to Rev. A. M. Andersen, one of the Norwegian pastors expressed his joy in the fact that the Danes within the Conference had organized their own work and were publishing their own paper, hoping that it would mean no split in the church as language and nationalism are only secondary.[2]

As the work among the Danes within the Conference gained in strength and importance the need for more pastors became pressing. To meet this need it was suggested that the Conference put a full-time Danish theological professor into its seminary to train Danish pastors so that the DanishLutherans might be gathered in and not allowed to drift into the un-Lutheran Grundtvigian branch.[3] This the Danish Mission Committee and the Danish Lutheran Church Paper considered as steps toward the same goal; an independent Danish Lutheran Church.

There was no particular dissatisfaction on the side of the Danes in regard to the treatment they received in the Conference. But here, naturally, the chief interest was

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1. K. S., 1878, 158 ff.
2. D. L. K., June, 1878.
3. K. S., June, 1882.

in the Norwegian work. In fact the Norwegian element of the Conference grew to such proportions that it entirely overshadowed the Danish work[1], though the spirit of the Norwegian Lutherans continued to be that of sympathetic interest. A. M. Andersen, in an article entitled "Reminiscences", writes: "Officials of the Conference became aware of the great influx of Danes into Nebraska and were anxious to get a mission started among them. Student H. Hansen was chosen to make a beginning. About Easter, 1884, he was ordained and sent to Omaha with the object of canvassing the field and starting missions wherever conditions allowed. Rev. Mr. H. Hansen soon proved to be the right man fot the task, zealous for the salvation of souls, energetic, practical, unyielding, with a winning personality.[2]

In the fall of 1882, a few Danish pastors met in an humble sod hut in Munson, Nebraska, to discuss the possibility and advisability of an independent Danish Church.[3] Other meetings followed in rapid succession. In October, 1883, at a meeting held at Hampton, Nebraska, upon the motion of Rev. Hansen-Rohe, it was agreed to appoint a committee to take steps toward organizing an independent church. The committee was instructed to do especially three things: (1) to write to the Executive Board of the Inner Mission Movement in Denmark and explain the action taken; (2) to appoint a man to go to Denmark to consult with the Board; (3) to draw up a constitution.[4] It is significant

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1. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 128.
2. Ansgar Lutheran, March 21, 1928.
3. See Danske I Amerika, I, Part 2, 118.
4. Hansen, I. H., op. cit., 31-38.

that these Danes, also, after being trained among the Norwegians, seemingly with no particular home ties, should at once seek definite connections with the Mother Church. When the Omaha District of the Conference, which consisted entirely of Danish pastors, held its next meeting in Omaha, February 28 to March 2, 1884, the Hampton committee reported, and, after lengthy discussion, the following resolutions were adopted: (1) to withdraw from the Norwegian-Danish Conference in a "brotherly way"; (2) to elect a man who should confer with the Danish Church in regard to a possible union with them; (3) to seek connection with the Inner Mission Society in Denmark and to send a man to confer with them during the following summer; (4) to found a Publishing Society for the purpose of supporting the D. L. K.; (5) to adopt a temporary constitution; (6) to continue the "Danish Mission Committee" of the Conference for the present.[1] When this action was reported to the next Annual Convention of the Conference there was no criticism nor objection voiced. The reasons for withdrawal were kindly accepted and the Norwegians wished their "Danish Brethren" Godspeed and blessing in their work among the Danes in America. The Conference dropped the "Danish" from its name and became known as the Norwegian Conference. A. M. Andersen speaks of this separation not as a split, but simply, as a friendly parting of the two nationalities[2], while the Danish Church began to refer to them as the "Seceders".[3] Largely because of this attitude the

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1. Ibid., 38-39.
2. K. S., April 6, 1884.
3. "De Udtraadte", a name often applied to this group.

Danish Church received little response from the new Danish Lutheran group when they expressed the hope of a possible union.[1]

After withdrawing from the Conference the Danish Lutherans lost interest in a union with the Danish Church. In September, 1884, they met in Argo, Burt Co., Nebraska, and organized the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Association.[2] Rev. Mr. A. M. Andersen continued to hold the leadership and inasmuch as he was pastor in Blair, Nebraska, the headquarters of the new church naturally were centered here. In fact, the new Danish Lutheran organization often was referred to as the "Blair Society."[3]

What was the future to have in store for the infant church? Andersen, who had been in Denmark during the summer, reported the failure of his mission to form connections with the Mother Church. He pointed out that the split between the Grundtvigians and Inner Mission folks in Denmark was widening. Though he received no response from The Committee he was allowed to speak in some of the Mission homes belonging to the Inner Mission Society where Danish American pastors of Grundtvigian leanings were barred. "I found," he states, "that sincere Christians had no confidence in the Grundtvigian movement, but rather feared it."[4] So with hopes shattered in regard to cooperation with the Mother Church, and, afraid of union with the Danish Church, in America, the new organization faced its task.

By March, 1885, A. M. Andersen had commenced to gather

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1. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 132.
2. Dansk Lutherske Kirkesamfund.
3. Blairsamfundet.
4. K. S., February 15, 1885.

young men about him in Blair to train them as Danish pastors.[1] Later recalling the humble beginnings of this school Andersen wrote: "The school was begun though we had no school building. Our private house in Blair served the purpose, one upstairs room as recitation room, and two others as dormitories, while Mrs. Andersen boarded the roomers."[2] In his teaching Andersen was assisted by his two nephews N. S. and A. S. Nielsen, who had studied in other schools, and, who were now completing their theological work under the direction of their uncle. This was the beginning of Trinity Seminary, Blair. Along with his teaching duties Andersen also was pastor of the congregations at Blair, Kennard-Crum, and Oakland Lyons, Nebraska. At once a school committee was appointed and a lively, as well as successful, campaign carried on for the school. In the appeal special stress was placed on the need of a seminary where young men can be trained to work among the Danes. Experience had taught that it was not safe to depend on a supply of pastors from Denmark and also that a native trained ministry was the most efficient one. The plans called for a $6,000 building of which amount the city of Blair promised to raise one-half.[3] The vigor and enthusiasm of youth was the impelling power in the new association. Things moved rapidly. The response to the appeal was gratifying so that at the Annual Convention in

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1. K. S., March 29, 1885.
2. A. L., October 17, 1928. Mr. Andersen continued in charge of the work at Blair till 1890 when Rev. S. B. Christiansen succeeded him. In 1895 A. M. Andersen returned to the school at Blair to be the co-worker of C. B. Christiansen.
3. D. L. K. May 15, 1885.

August they could vote to commence building operations, but no debts should be incurred. The official name given to the school at this time was: Trinity Seminary of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Association.[1]

The new feeling of independence, and the joy of doing things, brought forth good response during the beginning of this new church. Says the Jubilee booklet of the United Church: "This church's congregations were willing to give, and at times almost did so beyond their means. To be sure they were given ample opportunity, both in the building of a school, as well as in supporting the different missions of the church."[2] If this spirit of enthusiasm could have been strengthened by further cooperation with other Danish Lutherans in America the future would undoubtedly have had greater things in store for Danish Lutheranism in this country. But friction and open animosity cooled the ardent spirit in the course of time and frequently made real progress impossible. Criticism was heaped upon this small, devoted group of men from different sources.[3] From the homeland came words of condemnation because the Association could not cooperate with other Danish Lutherans. The Danish Church in America was in harmony with this attitude. Yet they, at the same time, recognized the fact that the Association was successful in its work, as seen in the following observation taken from the Danish Church paper: "The seceders,

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1. D. L. K., October 1, 1885.
2. United Danish Church Jubilee Booklet, 1896-1921, 21.
3. Nye Meddelelser, January, 1885.

according to their paper, are building their seminary at Blair, Nebraska, at a cost of about $6,000. Why can we not raise money as readily as they?" Again in April we read: "The report about the Blair school says that it has been easy to collect $300 because many have given till it hurt. Poor farmers and preachers have contributed sums as large as $200, $100, $75, etc., and that without begging."[1]

While individuals continued to work for closer cooperation between the two bodies nothing worth while was accomplished. There were fundamental differences which could not be removed by a gesture of friendship. In fact, the differences were rather augmented. In a long and heated dispute the Association defended the traditional Lutheran position while the Danish Church championed a more liberal interpretation.[2]

On October 1, 1886, the seminary and high school were dedicated and opened with A. M. Andersen as president. Several attempts were made to secure a Danish university trained pastor as head of the school. When these failed they finally added to the teaching staff one of their own young men, A. J. Dahm, who had been trained in the Norwegian seminary. While no great numbers flocked to the institution, the work grew and in 1892 the Board of Trustees requested the church to enlarge the preparatory school.[3] The school at Blair was the heart and life of the Danish Association. It was the one institution to which

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1. K. S., April 18, 1886.
2. Ibid., also D. L. K., October 15, 1885.
3. Annual Report, Danish Association, 1892, 44.

all the faithful contributed and it thus became the main bond of union. Here young men were trained for the mission work in the numerous Danish Lutheran settlements throughout the Middle West.

Both schools and Association grew in strength as the work extended into new communities. One source of its strength was its theological unity. There was no question as to its doctrinal basis, for the Word of God was the supreme authority to the humble pastors, in faith, life and doctrine. The big task which lay before the small Association was one which demanded faith and sacrifice. After ordaining two men at the first Annual Convention there were now nine pastors with their congregations and unlimited mission fields. About two hundred souls came under the spiritual care of every pastor. The Association had one congregation in Kansas, one in Iowa, two in Minnesota, and five in Nebraska. Seven years later it had grown in number twenty-seven pastors with thirty-four congregations and twenty-three mission places.[1] From a membership of a few hundred it had increased to 4127 members of which 1417 were listed as confirmed members. There were now seven pastors in Nebraska, three in Iowa, six in Minnesota, two in South Dakota and three in California, while the Annual Report records the fine spiritual growth within the church.

During the course of the next few years the Danish Association drew nearer and nearer to the Inner Mission group

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1. Op. cit., 1891, 45 ff.

within the Danish Church. When these finally withdrew from the Danish Church, union became the important topic among the pastors of the Association. A. M. Andersen came to the conclusion that the group of pastors coming out of the Danish Church were their spiritual brethren, one with them in faith and spirit.[1] Others already began to advocate the merging of the two papers representing these groups.[2] A more intimate relation gradually developed between the Association and this new group of Lutheran pastors. "One cause for this," points out a writer, "was especially a collection of religious songs which the Blair society made in 1892 and published in two editions under the name "Sangeren...This songbook which has since appeared in many editions with supplements, found a warm reception, especially in the'Mission Society."[3] circles in the Danish Church to whom many of the songs were new. There is something very real about the idea 'at synge sig sammen'[4] and there is a great truth in what Bjornson says: "Song unites in that it mellows (fortoner)...Though 'Sangeren' has its limitations...it has filled an important mission."[5]

At the Annual Convention of the Association in Albert Lea, Minnesota, the sentiment favored an early merger to take place if possible by the Fall of 1896.[6] This action found

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1. Danskeren, September 27, 1894.
2. Op. cit., September 19, 1895.
3. Mission Society, also called Danish Church in North America.
4. To become one in singing.
5. United Church Jubilee Booklet, 22. Note: Might one prophesy that the "Hymnal for Church and Home", edited by a joint committee of the United and Danish churches, shall accomplish the same in years to come.
6. Danskeren, June 11, 1896.

unanimous response in the Annual Convention of the Danish Church in North America[1], and thus the final step was taken for the merger in October, 1896.[2]

The Danish element which had come out of the Norwegian Church, to form an independent church, was now united with another group of Danish Lutherans, to lay the foundation for the strongest Danish Lutheran body in the United States: the United Church.

We must now return to the beginnings of that branch of the Danish Lutheran Church in America which has experienced a continued history of faithful labor from about 1870 to the present day: the Danish Church.

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1. Ibid., After separating from the Danish Church the Mission Society soon changed its name to the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America.
2. Op. cit., October 15, 1896.

CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNING OF CHURCH ORGANIZATION OF DANISH ORIGIN

"One-fourth of a century passed between the founding of the first Danish settlement and the first efforts of the Danish Mother Church at Mission work."[1] In the previous chapter the beginning of Danish Lutheran work has been traced as it grew into an independent church among the Norwegians. We now turn to the church that resulted from the mission activities of the Danish Mother Church among its children in America, that is, the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The Danish work carried on by the Norwegian Lutherans naturally was limited. The great majority of Danes who had religious interests were left to seek their own church connections. There was plenty of religious propaganda to be sure among the Danish settlers. "Evangelists, prophets and missionaries"[2] worked on all sides. When the Lutheran pastors finally arrived these independent workers had established congregations, which became the target of the new pastors who spoke of their founders as "sectarians, enthusiasts or fanatics."

Through L. C. Clausen the Church in Denmark had been appealed to. The Committee was the direct result of his visit and correspondence. When the existence of this Committee became

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1. Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 80.
2. Ibid., 83.

known among the Danish Lutherans in America urgent appeals began to cross the ocean requesting The Committee for men and means to establish congregations. For Chicago, for instance, where there were a great many Danes, they asked for a pastor of university training "who could serve the congregation by administering the sacraments and preaching the Word in the spirit of the Mother Church." In Luck, Wisconsin, they longed "to hear the Word in the Danish from a believing man, who has the gift of God to preach a gracious Word." In Manistee, Michigan, there was a "deep longing for a man who can preach the Word and administer the sacraments." As a rule no questions were asked in these early days whether the pastor was Grundtvigian, or of the Inner Mission movement, as long as he was "an honest Christian and tolerably gifted."[1] The Danish folk church, however, was slow to respond, resulting in the Norwegian Lutherans reaping a considerable harvest among the Danes. Yet many could not feel at home there. In the homeland they had heard powerful Inner Mission and Grundtvigian preachers. And "they could not really be satisfied with the dark and stern orthodoxy and pietism which was given expression among the Norsemen", says a Danish writer.[2] The Danish pastors, he continues, were more evangelical and Danish - an observation which clearly reflects Grundtvigian influence.

When the Danish Church at home, aroused by these appeals from different sources, sought information about the Danes in

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1. Op. cit., 87.
2. Den Danske Kirke, 7.

America, they did not communicate with Lutheran pastors but with Bishop Henry Whitehouse, who was a member of the Anglican Continental Society.[1] The information secured through the Anglican Bishop was used as mission propaganda and received wide publication in the Inner Mission Tidings.[2] How much the bishop was interested in the Danish Lutherans in America is a debatable matter. The fact is that he made a special trip to Copenhagen, Denmark, to seek men, who would work among the Danes in America, under the Episcopal Church. In this particular mission the Bishop failed. In correspondence, however, he told of the indifference of the Danes to the church and suggested that the Mother Church start mission work in America. Late in 1867 he again advised his friends in Denmark and requested that a committee of three - a pastor and two laymen - be sent to America to investigate the possibility for opening work among the Danish Lutherans.[3] This was done later, especially after C. L. Clausen's visit to Denmark. Clausen's presence, furthermore, inspired the most important step taken in the homeland, when, at a meeting in Ryslinge in 1868, a number of pastors decided to organize the"Church Society of Fyen's District",[4] which among other things was to foster the idea of mission work among the Danes in America. At the first convention held by this society, in Odense, Fyen, October 7-8,1869, it was especially the Reverend Johan Moeller of that city who championed this cause.

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1. Vig, P. S., Dansk Lutherske Mission i Amerika, 32.
2. Indre Missions Tidende, September 25, 1867.
3. Andersen, R., C. L. Clausen, 165.
4. Kirkelig Forening for Fyens Stift.

His appeal touched the hearts of the members of the convention and led to the organizing of the "Committee[1] for the advancement of the Gospel among the Danes in America."[2] The first five men to serve on this important Committee were the four pastors: Johan Clausen, Ryslinge; Johan Moeller, Odense; Dr. L. Helveg, Odense; G. Stroem, Morselv and Kammerraad Plesner, manager of the Hellerup estate. The Committee at once commenced its activities. In the spring of 1871 its first representatives were sent to America, where they were destined to lay the foundation for what became the most Danish-spirited church in America, the Danish Church.

The chief point of contact which The Committee had in America, was, for some time at least, its inspirer, the Reverend C. L. Clausen, who had assured The Committee that if they sent men to America he would secure ordination for them; a promise which he faithfully kept.[3]

It is important to remember that most of the members of The Committee belonged to the Gmandtvigian movement. This played an important part in the early organization and growth of the Danish Church in America. This spirit and outlook guided the infant Church into positions and policies that could not continue to satisfy everybody. On The Committee served the Rev. J. Clausen who for a time belonged to the Inner Mission Society and was known to be a friend of V. Beck. Why was not Beck also a member of the Committee, asks Vig.[4] If he had been,

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1. "Udvalget".
2. Nye Meddelelser, 1870, 3.
3. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 39.
4. Ibid., 40.

the whole story of the Danish Lutherans in America might have been different. Beck was already interested in the Danish Lutherans in America, working through the Norwegian Church. So when the above-mentioned society was organized on Fyen V. Beck said: "When this society had commenced its activity, he (Rev. J. Clausen) asked me if the society might not be given the American mission work, to which I gladly consented, as I already had much to look after because of the Inner Mission activities here at home. Thus the matter was taken out of my hands, so that I had no influence on the appointment of the men who were sent as pastors to the Danes in America."[1] No doubt V. Beck would have had a strong influence on The Committee, as later history shows.

In the early summer of 1871 The Committee sent three men to America to look over the Danish Lutheran mission field. The commission was in charge of the Reverend A. C. L. Grove-Rasmussen[2], a man who for some years had been president of the Inner Mission work in Slesvig.[3] Here he had been sought as a "revival preacher."[4] But after publishing his traveling account from the America trip he had to leave Slesvig to seek a pastorate in Denmark proper. Objections were raised to Grundtvigian tendencies which appeared in his report published in the "Nordisk Masnedskrift, 1871". With this pastor of the Mother Church came A. S. Nielsen, a thirty-nine year-old lay

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1. K. S., 1875, #15, Appendix.
2. Den Danske Kirke, 10-11.
3. Vig, F. S., op. cit., 43.
4. Vaekkelses Predikant.

preacher and R. Andersen, a twenty-three-year-old mission student While Grove-Rasmussen came chiefly to study the conditions in America, the two laymen were here to serve their Danish Lutheran brethren as spiritual guides. On June 12, 1871, the Commission landed in New York.[1] In a letter written in Odense May 13, 1871, Dr. L. Helveg of The Committee had stated the purpose of this visit to be: to gather the Danes for "homelike services and the youth into Danish schools."[2] After a brief stop in New York the Commission went to Chicago where R. Andersen had to enter a hospital on account of illness. Separating from the rest of the group Grove-Rasmussen made a hurried trip through the Middle Western states where many Danes were to be found. Between 1860-1870 large numbers of Danes poured into these sections. From Chicago he went to Milwaukee, thence to Madison, Wisconsin, and St. Ansgar, Iowa. At the latter place he spent three days with the veteran Danish Norwegian pastor, Clausen, and with him studied the whole Danish situation. While different places, such as Neenah, Wisconsin, Sheffield, Illinois, etc. were discussed, only a few could have been visited. Clausen, however, we are told gave Grove-Rasmussen the general advice: Just send us pastors; there will be plenty of work for them to do.[3] From Ansgar the journey continued to Cedar Falls. In his later accounts he referred to Omaha, Nebraska, as a good place for a Danish congregation. Fremont, Nebraska, and Council Bluffs,

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1. During May that year the Mormons sent eight missionaries to Denmark, see Vig, op. cit., 45.
2. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 46.
3. Ibid., 48.

Iowa, were named as possible "annexes" to such a congregation. From Omaha he journeyed to Grand Island, the most western point on his tour of inspection. The homeward journey took him to Sioux City, Iowa, Fort Dodge, back to Cedar Falls, where again he met A. S. Nielsen, who was ready to return to Denmark to get his family and secure ordination - if possible. But leaving Nielsen here, Grove-Rasmussen went to Canada by way of Minneapolis for a brief visit. By September Grove-Rasmussen was ready to publish his findings.[1] He had refused an invitation to become pastor in Dannebrog, Nebraska, preferring the comforts of homeland.[2] However, it must be remembered that Grove-Rasmussen did not come to America with the intention of remaining.

During the same year, 1871, two Danish Lutheran pastors arrived in America, N. Thomsen and A. Dan. Thomsen had been a missionary to India under the Danish Mission Society since 1865, where he had received ordination. He became interested in the Danish work in America and accepted a call to the Danish Lutheran Church in Indianapolis, Indiana.[3] Adam Dan, born in Odense, Fyen, 1848, was educated partly at the University of Copenhagen. After studying at the Basel Mission School he went as a missionary to Egypt where because of local difficulties he was compelled to leave, going from there to Jerusalem. Failing health caused him to accept a call to the Lutheran Church in Racine, Wisconsin,[4] and he reached New York a few days before the

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1. Nordisk Maanedskrift, September, 1871.
2. Den Danske Kirke, 10.
3. Nelson, O. N., I, 169.
4. Ibid., 374-5.

representatives of The Committee landed.[1] Before this the Norwegian Danish pastor J. Mueller-Eggen of that city had appealed to the Church in Denmark for a Danish pastor. Though a missionary, Dan had been refused ordination by the Danish bishop as he had no university examination. After accepting the call of the Danish Lutheran in Racine he was ordained in Racine on July 6 by the secretary of the Norwegian Conference, the Reverend J. Mueller-Eggen, on the commendation of V. Beck. Thus the honor again goes to the Norwegian Lutheran Church for ordaining the first pastors of the work that later became the Danish Church. From Racine, A. Dan went to administer to other Danish settlements, laying the foundation for future congregations. After spending nine years in Racine, he served the Danish Church for four years in California. It is of interest to note that the two first pastors of the Danish Church did not come to America directly from home, but from the Foreign Mission Field.[3]

A. S. Nielsen, after separating from Grove-Rasmussen, went from Chicago to Lucerne, Iowa, where the Danish lay-preacher Peter F. Nicholajsen had labored since 1854, holding a license from the General Synod.[4] While holding a license from the English Lutheran Church he preached in a Scandinavian church and curiously enough belonged to a German congregation. A. S. Nielsen had hoped to settle among these Danes but failed. Though Nicholajsen had asked that one of the Danish visitors stop over

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1. Den Danske Kirke, 12.
2. Christiensen, T. P., op. cit., 86.
3. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., I, 169
4. Den Danske Kirke, 11.

at his church the two were of a different spirit. Nielsen was a man representing the finest and best of Danish culture, as found in Denmark's intellectual center the University of Copenhagen.[1] Nicholajsen was rough and ready with little appreciation for the finer things of life. So A. S. Nielsen decided to go to Ansgar, Iowa, hoping to meet Grove-Rasmussen and C. L. Clausen and to secure information from the latter about places where Danish congregations might be organized. On his way he chanced to stop over in Cedar Rapids. At the railroad station a drunken Dane told him about "plenty of Danes in Cedar Falls."[2] Proceeding to Cedar Falls he was given a warm reception and here Grove-Rasmussen and C. L. Clausen met him. The congregation in Cedar Falls, which up to this time had been served by Clausen, was ready to call Nielsen as their resident pastor. The call was unique. It was signed by five members of the settlement and endorsed by Clausen. When Nielsen was ready to request ordination in Denmark, to make the call seem more official, the seal[3] of the Danish consul Carl Drayer, a druggist in Chicago, was affixed.[4] But even this did not bring the coveted ordination. Says an observer: "This incident is a good illustration of the unsuccessful attempt, which was frequently made to bring Western pioneers under the control of the European state church machinery or at least under its influence."[5] Upon the advice of

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1. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 56 ff.
2. Ibid., 47.
3. Seal was likely secured through the influence of Grove-Rasmussen
4. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 55.
5. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., II, 426.

Grove-Rasmussen and Clausen the invitation was accepted and the first representative of The Committee was called to begin the great task of planting Danish Lutheranism in America.

The pastor-elect at once made preparations to return to Denmark to bring his family to their new home in America. But he also fostered the secret hope of securing ordination while in Denmark. For that purpose he went to his old friend, the Bishop of Aalborg,[1] Jutland. His fond wish, however, was not realized, for, inasmuch as he was not a theological candidate from the university, the bishop refused to ordain him. Disappointed and somewhat embittered, he returned to America where he received ordination at the hands of the old Danish pioneer, C. L. Clausen, in St. Ansgar church, November 17, 1871.[2] Nielsen was now ready to begin his task at Cedar Falls, where he located with his family. "It is almost tragic," says Vig, "that the (Danish) folk-church, which pastor Nielsen, as well as other Danish pastors, continually referred to as 'our Mother Church', and whose freedom[3] and spirit of tolerance was continually upheld as the example, which we Danish pastors in America should follow, refused to ordain her first representative in America."[4]

The third member of the Commission, R. Andersen, had been left in Chicago in a hospital suffering from smallpox. Still young in years he was anxious for more education. From

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1. Kierkegaard, P. C.
2. Den Danske Kirke, 12.
3. Frihed og Kummelighed
4. Vig, op. cit., 59 ff.

his youth Andersen had belonged to the Inner Mission movement, while the greater part of his education had been obtained privately under the guidance of a Danish pastor.[1] Though Foreign Missions service was his goal, he accepted the offer of The Committee to go to America where he was to seek a position as teacher of Danish children. No such job seemed to be available and he therefore accepted the advice of Clausen's friend to enter the Norwegian Conference Augsburg seminary. While attending the ordination of A. Dan in Racine, he met a professor of that institution and the two agreed that he should enter the seminary in September and graduate the following year. Along with his theological studies Andersen was asked to teach history in the preparatory department[2], a task for which he was well fitted. It is not an insignificant fact that this young man who was to give so many years of service to the Danish Church should come under the influence of conservative Norwegian Lutheranism.

During his year at the seminary he held services in different Danish settlements in Wisconsin. His Christmas vacation, 1871, was spent in Waupaca, Wisconsin, administering to the many Danes of that community. This large settlement extended the young student a call, and here he was ordained on June 26, 1872, by the man with whom he had first come to America, A. S. Nielsen.[3] It was at this solemn occasion that the four Danish pastors, who were to begin the organization of the Danish

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1. J. Clausen.
2. Andersen, R., C. L. Clausen, 168.
3. Den Danske Kirke, 12.

Church, met for the first time. They were N. Thomsen, A. Dan, A. S. Nielsen and R. Andersen. Andersen began his long faithful service in the Danish Church at Waupaca, Wisconsin, but the greater part of his activities have been confined to the Eastern states. Probably his most important service has been his self-sacrificing work as immigrant pastor in greater New York and Brooklyn, where he is carrying on his task to this day, a man ripe in years and hallowed by faithful service. But another great contribution which he has made to Danish Lutheranism are his historical collections and writings.

Busy days followed for these four Danish Lutheran pioneers of the Middle West. Calls came for their services from every direction and they were always ready to answer, with no regard for their personal comfort. "Thus they all journeyed here and there, visiting Danish settlements. In the heat of summer or in the cold of winter as well as when spring brought impossible roads they journeyed up and down the country."[1] Often they struggled through pathless forests with oxteams drawing the sled. Those were no days of ease. But they came to be missionaries, not to "enjoy life." To "go to church" meant to walk, if streams allowed, to the nearest one-roomed schoolhouse or rude neighbors' cabin. The schoolhouses and cabins were hot and stuffy, when in the wintertime the congregation gathered around the old time box-stove. There was nothing beautiful and

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1. Den Danske Kirke, 13.

little that was inspiring about these pioneer services. Meeting with other folks was undoubtedly one of the greatest attractions that brought the scattered settlers "to church." The everyday overalls or home spun suit was the Sunday attire. Often the old Danish wooden shoe helped to make the picture complete.

While the few Danish pastors labored faithfully they found little encouragement or re-inforcements from the Mother Church. No new volunteers could be found among the young pastors in Denmark. Since no theologically trained men offered their services for America, in spite of appeals in papers and magazines, The Committee made an agreement in 1872 with the president of Askov High School, South Jutland, to receive and train "such men as volunteered for services in the Mission (American)."[1] This helped to solve the problem. True, it opened the doors to men of less training. But the course of events proved that it brought to America men ready to face the hardships of the pioneer pastor where the university trained theologian could not adjust himself. Ten more pastors were added to the first four during the next six years. "These fourteen did most of the work before the final organizing of the Danish Church."[2] The pastors who remained in America were usually short course men from Askov High School which represented the Grundtvigian theology and philosophy of life. The expense of the theological training that these men received was

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1. Nye Meddelelser, 1872.
2. Den Danske Kirke, 14.

carried largely by The Committee. For a time they also paid the traveling expenses of the candidate to America, spending approximately 10,000 crowns[1] annually, of which the Danish government paid about one-third. The balance was secured through free-will offerings among the congregations, Grundtvigian and Inner Mission friends alike.[2]

In the meantime the few Danish Lutheran pastors in America carried on, cooperating as best they could. At a meeting in Neenah, Wisconsin, September 8-9, 1872, two Danish pastors[3], with some laymen, took the first important step toward some permanent organization.[4] Here was born the Church Mission Society.[5] "It was an evening in September, 1872, that some pastors and laymen sat together in Neenah, Wisconsin, and discussed the spiritual condition of their countrymen in America. What could and should be done to reach as many as possible with the blessed message,[6] was one of the problems. Dan made three proposals at this meeting: (1) to form a Mission society, (2) to publish a church paper, and (3) to start a folk high school. It was a big program for so few. But the society was organized and the church paper, "Kirkelig Samler" was commenced. At this meeting Dan was elected the first chairman of the society and editor of the paper, and in its first issue we

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1. Ten thousand Kroner equals $2,500.
2. Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 88.
3. R. Andersen and A. Dan.
4. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., I, 169.
5. Kirkelig Missions Forening.
6. Den Danske Kirke, 16-17.

read: "Church Mission Society is the name of a group of pastors and laymen within the Lutheran Church, organized at Neenah, Wisconsin, September 9, 1872. It is founded upon the baptismal covenant of the holy, universal church and the Word of God as God's Word to the congregation, and will be in full harmony with the confessional writings of our Danish Lutheran Mother Church."[1] It is significant that the baptismal covenant should receive such a prominent place in the confessional statement of this society. Here is reflected the strong Grundtvigian tendencies which in the course of time were to become prominent in this group of pastors.

The purposes for which this society was founded leave no doubt as to the Lutheran and Danish forces that occasioned it. Among others we must mention the following: (1) to preach to the unregenerate and labor against the unbelieving, the sects, etc.; (2) to gather the Danes and through mission meetings to arouse the spiritual interest in these Danish folks; (3) to maintain an intimate connection with the church in the homeland and to do everything possible to secure believing pastors for this country. To carry on propaganda along these lines was the special mission of the church paper. While Grundtvigian influences were evident in the creating of this society it must not be overlooked that the Inner Mission movement poured its life into this group as well. Speaking of the

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1. K. S., October, 1872, #1, 1.

source of inspiration for the organizing of the Church Mission Society, Kirkelig Samler said: "The blessed fruits as seen in the work of the Inner Mission Society in Denmark was the inspiration."[1]

This newly formed Church Mission Society was not a "Synod" with a complete set of doctrines, laws and by-laws, which was characteristic of other Lutheran churches. From the very beginning there was a strong antipathy to a closely knit organization. In fact some of the Danish pastors never officially "joined" the Church Mission Society[2], but were willing to cooperate, contribute and attend the two annual mission meetings, one of which was to serve as the "annual meeting."[3]

While the Church Mission Society was being organized another pastor was added to the ranks of the infant church. A. L. J. Soeholen arrived from Denmark that year and was ordained on September 8, 1872, at Cedar Falls, so that he could take charge of the congregation in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. During the following year two men, ordained in Denmark, were added to the number of pastors, J. H. Højberg and H. Rosenstand. The former had been called to the small Danish Lutheran congregation in Chicago while Rosenstand became pastor in Manistee, Michigan. During 1874 the first two students from Askow High School came to America to serve in the Danish Church, O. L. Kirkeberg and Jens Pedersen.

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1. K. S., October, 1872.
2. Den Danske Kirke, 18.
3. K. S., October, 1872.

It was toward the end of June that same year, that another important event took place within the circles of Danish Lutheranism. A number of pastors met in Racine, Wisconsin, and discussed the problem of a more definite organization and agreed on the advisability. This new organization was called: "The Danish Lutheran Church in America"[1] in which the Church Mission Society was to continue as a committee. It was no mere accident that the new organization adopted no formal constitution. A goodly number of the pastors opposed any kind of a constitutional statement or ecclesiastical machinery, a spirit typical of Grundtvigianism which stood for extreme congregational government and regarded as sacred individual freedom. In the subsequent history of the new church this extreme individualism has often been a stumbling block to cooperative efforts and organized efficiency. Whatever might be the strength or weakness of its organization the Danish Church in America had started on its way. While some of the pastors insisted upon separation, the church as a whole was anxious to remain in intimate relation to the Mother Church. Early in its history the following resolution was unanimously adopted: "We, the Danish ministers and congregations, hereby declare ourselves to be a branch of the Danish National Church, a missionary department established by that Church in America."[2] The Danish government recognized this relationship and theological candidates of the Danish university, who went to

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1. Den Danske Kirke, 18.
2. Babcock, K. C., op. cit., 65.

serve the church in America, were ordained by a Danish bishop and appointed by the king as regular ministers of the Danish Church.[1] In Denmark The Committee has, of course, generally been looked upon as the highest authority in all matters of controversy or as an advisory board, whose advice was not always followed.[2] There has been then in the Danish Church in America, from its very beginning, these two contradictory tendencies (1) the extreme individual or at least congregational independence which has too often thwarted any kind of a unified program worthy of the resources of the Danish Church; (2) the very persistent desire to remain under the roof of the Mother Church as much as geographical hindrances would allow.

The Church paper, Kirkelig Samler, which first appeared in October, 1872, was chiefly a devotional periodical and a carrier of church news, and is chief repository of early Danish Lutheran history. The first issues were filled with the optimism and the enthusiasm of youth and prophesied great possibilities for the future. In the new year's issue of 1875 the editor writes: "Our Lord has been good to us. Three years ago there were only three pastors here and three congregations that considered themselves part of the Mother Church. At the same time many of our countrymen longed to hear the glad Tidings in the spirit and tongue, they had learned to love in the fatherland. Now our countrymen are meeting around God's Word, in Danish, in over twenty places in this great land, so

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1. See Hejberg and Rosenstand.
2. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., I, 167.

rich in material gifts. Now nine pastors work in these congregations as the servants of the Word. The living praise, which has poured forth from the peoples' lips at home, between channel and Sounds, has also begun to re-echo in the Middle West. The ties which bind us to Denmark, have not broken...and shall not break."[1] The work was moving along and a steady growth was apparent. Naturally the establishment of congregations often was slow as Danish settlers were scattered in small settlements while the competition of other churches also had to be met. Many congregations worshiped in school or sod-houses ten or fifteen years before they could erect even the most humble kind of a church structure.

One of the means of arousing interest in the preaching of the Word among the Danes and for stirring spiritual life were the Missionary Meetings, a kind of "camp meeting" in Danish settlements. These meetings, however, had nothing in common with the typical American camp meetings of frontier days, but were of Danish origin, used especially by the Inner Mission Society in Denmark. To this day they are used among Danish Lutherans for the purpose of deeper spiritual awakening. Vig says: "As one reads the first years of Kirkelig Samler and notices the references to Mission meetings and tours in the several states, it is as though one feels a spring atmosphere. Everything there is life...New Workers are constantly arriving...Laymen are active in building the Danish Church..."[2]

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1. K. S., New Year, 1875.
2. Vig, P. S. op. cit., 72.

Among a number of active workers, Vig especially refers to A. F. Andersen as being particularly zealous in his efforts. He was a high school student from Denmark and also represented what Vig called the "Believing" group, that is, the Inner Mission Society. He at first worked in Omaha from 1873-75, spending part of his time at the carpenter trade. Then he moved further west to labor in the Danish settlement in Kearney County. After spending time among the scattered Danes in Kansas he entered the Norwegian Conference, likely because he feared the Grundtvigian influence in the Danish Church.

To stir the interests for the American Mission The Committee in Denmark began to publish a paper[1] in 1872 which was to bring the news from the new field of labor. In one of its numbers we read: "The Christian work of mercy which the mother church has now undertaken for some years, and still is carrying on under the name of the Danish-American Mission, is not mission work in the general and usual sense of the word. There is no reference here to any activity among the American heathen (Indian). But it is a mission, which, through the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments in the mother tongue, hopes to supply the great spiritual needs among our people who have emigrated to America...
It is the aim of the Mission to seek the Danes in America and organize them into Lutheran congregations under pastors (and teachers) who will be educated partly at home, partly over there. Thus those who desire to remain with the old church

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1. Nye Meddelelser.

doctrines need not try every breeze of new theology of which there blow so many in America."[1] The mother church was at last beginning to be concerned about her spiritual children. Though it had taken her long to get started she now made ardent appeals for the support of that work. "The Danes in America", we again read, "in fact in all foreign lands - are the children of Danish congregations, of their own household. Therefore no mission effort, especially foreign, should lie nearer to our hearts, than the one that takes us to them."[2] When interests in Denmark often appeared to be at a low ebb the fault usually lay at the doors of the pastors in America who made no efforts to supply "Nye Meddelelser" with "Meddelelser", that is, news. There were times when The Committee even threatened to discontinue its publication because they had no reports and information from America to publish.

The scarcity of news was not due to lack of activity. The Kirkelig Samler was filled with reports and accounts from pastors and missionaries. Early in 1873 the announcement was made about the coming of Jens Jensen, who came as a missionary, without pay, to labor especially in Chicago. His "commission" urged that he labor for Christian awakening and growth according to Lutheran enlightenment. At the same time he was urged to avoid dispute and argumentation, unless necessary.[3] Evidently the Mother Church, whose Committee had sent him out, was already aware of the danger that lay in the love for

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1. Nye Meddelelser, 1872.
2. Ibid.
3. K. S., 1873, March 23.

dispute among the Danish Lutherans, which has been characteristic from the establishment of the church to the present day.

Here and there the new church life found material manifestation in building programs. From Cedar Falls, Iowa, Chicago, Neenah, Wisconsin, and other places reports are published telling of progress.[1] Jens Jensen from Chicago wrote that the new Danish church on Chicago Avenue was so far advanced that they can now use it for services.[2] This congregation was enthused and looked forward to greater things as they were expecting their pastor-elect, J. A. Hejberg from Copenhagen. With this new activity came a new church pride and demand for more strictly Danish services and pastors. In many places where the Norwegians had tried to serve the Danish Lutherans the people now began to demand Danish pastors. Complaints were brought against the Norwegian pastors and disputes with the Norwegian Conference or Synod became frequent and lively.[3]

The problem of reaching the far scattered settlements was a serious one and a question of discussion at most of the annual and semi-annual conventions.[4] Though only few in numbers the pioneer pastors spared no efforts to satisfy the many requests that came in, asking for church services.[5] Every pastor in the Danish Church along with his regular pastorate made mission tours for the purpose of opening up new work.

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1. K. S., 1873, March 23.
2. K. S., April, 1873.
3. Ibid., see Manistee, Michigan, Perth Amboy, N.Y., etc.
4. K. S., May, 1873, Semi-annual Convention at Racine, Wisconsin.
5. K. S., July, September, etc., 1873.

The Rev. Mr. A. Dan was active in Wisconsin[1] and Michigan[2] especially. On his missionary journeys he usually came into conflict with the Norwegians and showed little patience with them. After telling the story of one of his long and tedious journeys he said, at the end of the report: "It is to be hoped that the Danes in these places, as well as in others, as many as have hearts for the evangel of God's grace, will seek to be served by the Danish Church and not by different self-made American parties[3]" referring to the Norwegian Lutherans and American "sects" alike. From Nebraska missionary A. F. Andersen appealed for Danish pastors for several places, while he ministered to the Danes to the best of his ability. On March 24 he went to Blair where he preached to the Danes in Washington County. On Good Friday the same year he met with the Danes in Fremont, Nebraska, and from there journeyed west as far as Grand Island.[4] Those were busy days.

One of the problems faced in the missionary efforts of these pastors was the question of independent congregations. The conflict of the newly established work of the Danes with the older Norwegian work brought up the problem of church property. To avoid any further experience along that line a good many Danish congregations refused to go into any synod. There can be no doubt that this situation called forth further

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1. K. S., September, 1873.
2. K. S., August, 1873.
3. K. S., August, 1874.
4. K. S., August, 1874.

attempts at bringing about better synodical machinery.

As has already been indicated no definite constitution had been accepted in 1874 at Neenah, Wisconsin. In the course of the next few years there was much talk and discussion about a more definite constitution with laws and by-laws, executive committee and even a bishop. A well-established free-church, like those built by other bodies, was the hope of many within the Danish Church.[1]

At the annual convention, held again at Neenah, Wisconsin, beginning May 22, 1878, these problems were taken up. At the Neenah meeting of 1874 a sort of congregational constitution was adopted which had found use in various places.[2] Now new proposals were made in regard to a Synodical constitution. But constitution making was no easy task among the Danish Lutherans, especially while Grundtvigianism was in the saddle. One of the stumbling blocks of the first proposal at this meeting was the suggestion that a bishop be elected. It called forth vollies of argument. The majority remonstrated but A. S. Nielsen was the one who killed the proposal when he said: "It was not through the merits of a bishop that we came over here. The living congregation sent us. We must simply believe in the word that came from Jesus' mouth: let that be our bishop. Nothing else can bring peace and unity to us. For the present I am interested in no bishop but God, the Holy

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1. Den Danske Kirke, 18.
2. Big. op. cit., 163-4.

Spirit of the Word of our Faith. An ecclesiastical authority vested in a person I do not need. Some day the congregations will need a bishop and will then and therefore receive bishops by God's grace, called by the Spirit, martyr-bishops, as in the Apostolic days, who will lead their flock, ready and willing to lay down their lives for them. But that day is not yet."[1] It must be remembered that A. S. Nielsen had sought ordination from the hands of a Danish bishop, but had failed. His word had weight. No bishop was proposed. When, however, Nielsen attempted to block the proposals for a constitution he was not heard. While only recommendations were made to the convention at least one definite paragraph was adopted, namely: "The pastors and lay-delegates,met in convention at Neenah, declare themselves to be the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which will build on the confessions of the Mother Church and which agrees to bear this name before government."[2] There were fifteen pastors and fifteen laymen who accepted this proposal. At the next annual convention in April, 1879, in Racine, at least five other paragraphs were added after a lengthy and heated word battle. A number of pastors were zealously defending and demanding their rights as individuals, and opposed any kind of suggestion which seemed to curtail such freedom. To them it was exceedingly dangerous to vest any definite ecclesiastical authority in a single individual.

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1. Den Danske Kirke, 19.
2. Ibid., 20.

A compromise was affected whereby such authorities should be vested in a Board, the Church Board, as a governing Committee. To the above stated clause the following five were added: (1) the purpose: to bring their countrymen to the faith of the mother church; (2) the Church Board[1] to consist of a chairman and two trustees of which two should be pastors; (3) proposals in regard to delegates for the annual convention; (4) regulations in regard to ordination; and (5) directions for the editor of Kirkelig Samler.[2] A. S. Nielsen was at the same time elected president, A. Dan and C. Rasmussen, a merchant from Chicago as the other two members of the Church Board. A new solidarity was given the Danish Church. Yet it was significant that, though founded in 1872, this church did not succeed in adopting a constitution until 1879. But still more significant the constitutional ship was not safely anchored as yet. Before the schism at least four new constitutions were adopted, one in 1884, 1888, and two in 1893.[3]

In the church paper the dispute on the constitution and church government always occupied ample space. Many heated paper battles were waged. About a year after the adoption of the rather indefinite constitution providing a decentralized government Jens Pedersen took up the controversy with new vigor. Because of local difficulties he had been forced out of the congregation in West Denmark, Wisconsin, and had

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1. Styrelsen.
2. Op. cit., 20.
3. Big. op. cit., 165.

founded a new church there. In reviewing the history of the dispute he recalls the fact that at a meeting in Oconto, Wisconsin on November 4, 1878 four men had drawn up and signed the following recommendation: "The undersigned pastors herewith wish to declare to the coming annual convention (Racine) that they cannot consent to the drawing up of a church order which tends to set up a government and officials with ecclesiastical authority but regard it as sufficient, and at present as the only advisable solution, that a committee of three men be elected, who take over the responsibility for the churches business, to report to the church."[1] The church authorities had interfered with Petersen's work in West Denmark and he further pointed out that the spirit of the above proposal was embodied in the Racine constitution of 1879. The president according to that was simply to receive money and letters for mission work. In other words he was a business nead, without ecclesiastical authority over pastor or congregation. The theory was sound but in practice, Petersen contended the president was asked to interfer with pastors and obstreperous congregations. To avoid unnecessary delay and local grief there was quite a strong demand for a more centralized authority.

The problems and demands of the local parishes were so numerous and pressing that, perhaps, the average pastor had little time or energy to think beyond his own sphere of

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1. K. S., August 1, 1880

activity. Letters from pastors that reached the homeland often painted a dark picture.[1] The psychology of the Danish newcomer differed little from other new-comers. "Rich America" with its many promises and possibilities called forth a new joy of living. In religious matters it was a bit different. The average Danish immigrant had little experience in church affairs at home. They hesitated to unite with the weak struggling organizations of Danish Lutherans and many sought spiritual company in better established churches. Among the spiritually awakened Danes most were of Inner Mission circles who looked upon the Danish Church with a bit of suspicion. However many of these were won and became good members in the young church.[2] Others again faced the challenge with hopeful courage appealing for youg men to take up the ministry. A few saw the problems of the future in the full light of American development. Speaking of the language problem the Rev. Mr. T. Lyngby said in 1883: "Therefore it will be necessary in the course of time, that the pastors of our church be able to preach English; but when we have reached that stage, our congregations over here will undoubtedly show such growth that the Mother Church's task of supplying pastors will become superfluous---in time we must lay plans for our own theological school".[3] Only few could look that far. Their prob-

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1. Nye Meddelelser, Jan., July, 1883, Jan.,April, July 1884
2. op. cit., March 1882
3. op. cit., June 1882

lems were immediate. So, while they struggled along, many held on tenaciously to all that was Danish, while some returned to the homeland to seek better parishes.

The Mother Church continued to show an active and material interest in the Danish Mission in America. The original Committee, largely because of its provincial[1] character, did not prove fully satisfactory. In fact in certain circles the task of mission work in America was looked upon as impossible.[2] With the re-organization of The Committee[3] new enthusiasm and interests were aroused. As the Church at home stood united, with room enough for the different theological schools, she deplored any kind of division and friction among her spiritual children abroad. When the Church Association was formed Provost Hejberg, then chairman of The Committee wrote: "It is deplorable, that Danish pastors have consented to take such a step, the true congregation at home can only look upon this with grief".4 In the same issue Hejberg expressed this over the fact that V. Beck had become a member of The Committee so that now the interests of the Inner Mission group would be fully represented. About a month later V. Beck wrote that he had consented to join The Committee hoping that he, as presi-

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1. Fyen
2. op. cit., January 15, 1881
3. Called: The Committee of the Danish American Mission, five members, all residing in Copenhagen, Skat Roerdam was first chairman.
4. op. cit., May 15, 1885

dent of the Inner Mission Society, might enlist the whole Inner Mission force for the cause of the Danish Church in America.[1]

The New Committee from the geginning brought complete reforms and full data concerning the largeness of the work in America. The appeal for more pastors in America became more and more insistent[2]. It was hoped to encourage the church in America by publishing the number of students preparing at Askov High School to go to America. But the supply far from satisfied the demands. In 1882 three Danish American pastors returned to Denmark,[3] who painted in graphical terms need for pastors, especially in the great territories west of the Mississippi.[4] While the Committee put forth its noblest efforts to help the daughter church in America the financial support from the people was insignificant. Though the American mission was the largest, it received the least support.[5] Why did not the Danish church folks give more liberally to the American work where so many of their own members had gone? On one hand they were told of the great spiritual need among their countrymen in America, on the other they read of the fabulous wealth, and even saw it practically demonstrated, when some of their own people paid a visit to the mother land. Why should poor Denmark send money to rich America, even for church work?

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1. I. M. T., April 15, 1885
2. Nye Meddelelser, May, November 1881
3. op. cit., March 1882
4. ibid. also June 1882
5. See op. cit., July 1883

The appeals for more pastors seldom satisfied the demands. Along with the theological training given at Askov High School attempts were also made, for a time to prepare men at the University of Copenhagen. Here some of the most capable men that have served Danish Lutheranism in America received part of their theological training. In the spring of 1884 The Committee announced that five men from the university had been examined and recommended for services in America[1]. Only once, it seems did The Committee receive word from America not to send more men.[2] The Committee was exceedingly careful in the selection of its candidates, excluding the many volunteers who had neither the spiritual qualification nor the mental ability, for the strenuous task in America.[3]

The combined efforts of the mother and daughter churches was not without effect. The "Winning of the West" became a mighty challenge to Danish Lutheranism, and though greater results might probably have been expected, the harvest was not insignificant. The annual report of 1878 speaks of forty-four congregations and sixty-five preaching places, where among 5470 souls, 3598 were listed as communicant members.[4] It was no mean growth since the humble beginnings of 1871-3. Continually the Danish Church was pushing westward. Nebraska, Kansas, the Dakotas were calling for help. In 1880 A. Dan

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1. op. cit., April 24, 1884; Joergen Hansen, Peter Vig, Christian Falck, Jens Nielsen, Jersild and Jensen Moerkoev.
2. op. cit., January 1887
3. op. cit., July 1885
4. K. S., February 15, 1879

received a call to come to California, where he settled in Salinas County.[1]

Here among the many Danes a work was begun that demanded consecration and patience. The widely scattered Danes of the Golden coast manifested little religious interest so that the work there has never grown in proportion to the number of Danish Lutherans living on the Pacific coast.[2]

During the years 1880-86 twenty-five new pastors took up work in the Danish Church. Though the pioneer life was hard and lonesome every pastor was a self-appointed home-missionary. Year by year workers were sent from Denmark, though not more than one or two, some theological candidates, some lay-preachers and a few teachers. During the first years the majority of pastors, that came from the Mother Church, were probably Grundtvigian. After V. Beck became a member of The Committee in 1884 more Inner Mission men were added to the Danish Church.[3] The large immigration of the eighties supplied plenty of new material for the growth of the Danish Church. Differences soon arose however, which in the course of events, led to schism. With the increase of membership and expansion of the mission field new problems, as well as new missions, were thrust on the Danish Church. The agenda of the Annual Convention at Muskegon, Michigan, 1880 throwe

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1. Den Danske Kirke, 26
2. See K. S., February 1, 1882; Nye Meddelelser, May, November, 1881, et al.
3. Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 88

some light on the larger program of the church. (1) The position of the chairman of the Church Board and the question of the constitution still held the attention of the delegates; (2) There were lively discussion on the problem of baptismal sponsors. (3) Another problem often discussed was the pastoral relation of the Danish Lutheran pastors to those outside of the congregation, that is, non-members. (4) An entirely new problem faced the Danish Church through the many Danish Mormons in Utah. Should the Danish Church carry on Mission work among them? (5) The problem of Foreign Missionary activities also faced the infant church. (6) What should be the attitude of the church toward the popular and influential Secret Societies in America? (7) What place should confirmation occupy in the church in America?[1] Among these problems some came up periodically; others were soon settled. But the great central problem, that of home mission remained, while America continued to call upon Denmark for assistance. One who answered that call was the Rev. Mr. P. C. Tranberg who, after his arrival in America wrote: "(But)....he who knows anything about conditions in America can readily understand how the idea of taking that trip.... came to me. There are thousands upon thousands of Scandinavians.....And there are in all the North-American free-states only about twenty Danish Evangelical Lutheran pastors.....Our countrymen.....wander about, live and labor over there without pastor and church, without

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1. K. S., November 15, 1880

the Word and prayer,without the blessings which come to us through the Gospel of Jesus Christ."[1] With so few pastors and so many unchurched Danish Lutherans the parishes of many of the pastors were far beyond their strength. Rev. Soholm from Waupaca, Wisconsin speaks of the largeness of his parish as well as the difficulties of travelling.[2] Another writer deplored the spiritual indifference that greeted them in their efforts. H. J. Pedersen writing from Elk Horn, Iowa states: "It is a well known fact that ninety out of one hundred of those who left the Mother Church, were under no spiritual influence, even before they left Denmark. And only during the last few years have they been ministered to here. Most of the immigrants are poor folks of the most limited circumstances. The burden of poverty, which like a heavy load crushed them at home, is suddenly lifted, they not only earn a living, but they have a little to spare. Under such conditions many are liable to bow their knees to Mammon in his American form."[3] "Poor" Denmark was compared with "rich" America and the church, which showed little concern for them at home had no attraction for them now. So whether in the midst of a large Danish settlement or out among the far scattered pioneers of Nebraska and the Dakotas the work demanded heroism. K. C. Bogholdt in his little pamphlet has left an excellent picture of the trials

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1. K.S., August 1, 1882. Note: Tranberg spent a good many years in America, but only few as pastor in the Danish Church.
2. Nye Meddelser, May 1881
3. op. cit., March 1882

and hardships, that faced the pastor, who sought to gather his Danish countrymen into the church. Graphically he described his first tour to Grand Island and St. Paul, Nebraska, the parsonage on stilts, the hard and unlovely surroundings and many other things which made the life of the pioneer pastor hard. Though from the humblest walks of life many of the pioneers brought with them exalted ideas of the pastor they wanted, or remembered from home. For so humble a preacher as Bogholdt they had often nothing but words of criticism, referring to him as the "watchmaker" or "farmer" preacher. It seemed as though many were obsessed with the idea that a minister, who could work with his hands, could not be a "real minister". This, of course, was old country psychology.[1] But pastor Bogholdt held his own until he had won the confidence and love of his people, serving his church for many years, first as a faithful pioneer pastor, later as a capable leader and rpened advisor. From the now strong Danish settlement of Dannebrog, Nebraska the Rev. Mr. S. H. Wadsen wrote of the problems of his work on the frontier, where his countrymen had settled out of various motives.[2] From the heart of Kansas A. P. B. Becker reported concerning his pastoral duties. While he lived in Denmark, Kansas, he travelled as far east as Kansas City, Mo., and north and west along the Union Pacific Central

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1. Bogholdt, K.C., : Paa Praerien i Nybyggertiden, 30. For full account of a pioneer pastor's trip in Nebraska see also Nye Meddelser, June 1882
2. K. S., February 1, 1883

Branch from Atchison to Whiting, Greenleaf and Marysville administering to Danish Lutherans, who, he states were "hard to move".[1] From South Dakota many accounts appeared about the establishment of the work there. It was a difficult field. Though there were many Danes, non-Lutheran groups had reaped a large harvest among them. The Danish Methodists, Baptists and Adventists were very active and successful. Another writer told of his experience with revival meetings in South Dakota of the typical frontier type, with weeping, shouting and applauding.[2] The work in this section was hard physically, financially as well as spiritually. "For as the grasshoppers robbed the farmers of their first year's harvest, so have the swarms of 'sects' harrassed the Lutheran community here and stolen a large number of them that were raised behind the Lutheran fence."[3] The writer complained much because these "sects" took the best. It was only natural that such as were most anxious to become affiliated with the church should join the church that invited them, when the Danish Lutheran Church failed to come to them. Often the letters from these pastors were colored by a typical Danish melancholy. The problems were not confined to local congregations and missions. Though the numerical strength of the church increased the financial contributions did not keep pace. Many appeals came through the church paper, whose circulation was always very small. In 1883 the

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1. K. S., June 1, 1883
2. Jensen, P., Minder, 19
3. Nye Meddelser, January 1886

editor Rev. Mr. Lyngby complained about the shortage of funds and deplored the small salaries paid the pastors who were living on starvation rations. The article was concluded with a severe criticism of the "luxuries of the homes while the church goes starving".[1] There is no doubt that this lukewarmness can be traced back to the Mother Church. Those who came with a religious bent of mind had been thoroughly weaned from any reference to pastoral authority by agitations carried on at home by the Inner Mission group and the Grundtvigians alike. Each man considered himself an authority on doctrine and church polity and gave but little heed to opinions and wishes of the minister.[2]

By 1884 the number of pastors had grown to a small army of about forty who were building the Danish Church in thirteen states and as reported by Nye Meddelelser: "The work is still growing".[3] Every Annual Convention brought new problems of Home Mission Expansion. New fields were requesting pastors and new congregations asking for admission. At the Annual Convention of 1886 the problem of Home Missions was much debated. The Rev. Mr. K. Anker, for many years one of the foremost leaders, first in the Danish and later in the United Church, made a stirring appeal for more co-operation among pastors and lay folks alike. After his appeal the following resolution was adopted: "That the Annual Convention recommend to the Executive Committee that church services be given the scattered small Danish settle-

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1. K. S., June 15, 1883
2. Bille, J. H., op. cit., 18
3. Nye Meddelelser, April 1884

ments..... during the coming year".[1] To make further efficiency possible the same pastor, at the next Annual Convention proposed the dividing of the Church into districts to facilitate co-operation in the work. Some of the pastors looked upon this further step in organization as frought with "danger", as it might lead to the establishing of "independent" district synods. They were content with the traditional "mission meetings".[2] The plan was, however, adopted and to every district was now given the task of looking after its own home mission problems with some financial help from the church as a whole.[3] While the district division of the Danish church improve the machinery for carrying on Home Mission work the necessary money could not be collected. Often the pastors did not train their congregations to give, except for the local program. P. S. Vig, one of the future leaders in Danish Lutheranism, made a rather unique appeal. He advised the pastors not to be hesitant in asking their people to give more. People always complain that they have nothing to give, he wrote, but God is always giving. And then followed this curious account.[4]

10 showers of rain,	$25.00 each	$250.00
2 special showers,	$50.00 each	100.00
60 days of sunshine,	$5.00 each	300.00
	Due God Total	$650.00

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1. K. S., November 14, 1886
2. op. cit., October 30, 1887
3. op. cit., November 4, 1888
4. K. S., October 1887

John Smith to the Lord	
on pastor's salary	$10.00
to Home Missions	0.25
to Foreign Missions	0.10
Total	$10.35

But the financial response remained insufficient. Though equally blessed with material wealth the Danish Lutherans have never been able to reach the per capita giving that has been common among the other Scandinavian Lutherans.

Another problem that became noticeable in the church at this time was the language problem. Even in the frontier settlements the youth of Danish congregations could not be reached and fully satisfied by the use of Danish. Writers in the church began to request more English pamphlets that might be used for arousing the interests of the young folks.[1] A storm of opposition broke forth at the mere suggestion. Yet it is of interest to note that there were men who judged the situation correctly and were able to face the future with an open mind. Here again Vig stood out as a man of vision. Speaking of the future of the church in relation to its youth he said: "We must remember that our fatherland is not theirs. To some extent it is impossible for them to be Danish. It is against nature to expect them to be Danish.....But where children have enjoyed family prayers and religious training in Denmark, they will continue to want Danish in their worship and church ser-

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1. K. S., October 1887

vices. But Danish will not live among the young without a true religious foundation."[1] His was a voice crying in the wilderness, a prophetic voice that attracted but few hearers. Many articles appeared as counter-attacks against such a dangerous position as Vig's. Practically all contended that the Danish language must have the first right in home and church among the Danes in America.[2]

One of the burning problems of Home Mission work that early confronted the Danish Church was the Mission to the Mormons in Utah where thousands of Danes had settled. The agenda for the annual convention of 1880 contained proposals for the work among the Danish Mormons. A good many articles appeared in the church paper urging the Danish Church not to neglect her duty to the many countrymen living in practical paganism.[3] But the plans drifted along without much support or interest until it was brought to the attention of the church through the efforts of a man who came into the Danish Church from the Presbyterians, the Rev. Mr. F. W. Blohm. Blohm had come to America in one of the Mormon immigration groups. In Utah he had become converted "back" to Christianity and was serving as missionary to the Mormons in the Presbyterian Church. For some reason he was transferred from Salt Lake City. But he refused to go and began to seek other connections, expressing a longing for his childhood church, the Danish Lutheran. The editor of

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1. op. cit., June 17, 1888
2. See K. S., July 22, Sept. 6, et. al., 1888
3. See K. S., July 15, 1883

the church paper, "Kirkelig Samler", hoped that the Danish Church might make use of him,[1] but even before Blohm was actually taken on by the Danish Church he began his mission, and Miss Anne Rasmussen of the Danish Church went to Salt Lake City to assist Blohm.[2] At the next annual convention Blohm was present. After promising to leave the Presbyterian Church he was admitted into the fold of Danish Lutheran pastors without any further questioning or examination. No sooner had the Danish Church taken on this new mission project, then appeals went home to the Mother Church for assistance in this work.[3] During the next few years frequent appeals appeared in the church paper.[4] The home church took up the cause with the usual thoroughness and devotion. Long and interesting articles appeared in Danish papers telling the history of Mormon missions in Scandinavia. Letters from Blohm were printed in which plans for a visit to Denmark are announced.[5] Under the energetic direction of Blohm the work grew in Salt Lake and soon he had secured a respectable plant for his mission. But the Church coult not keep pace. In a little while Blohm faced a debt he was unable to meet, and the Danish Church began to criticize him, until finally he felt constrained to leave the church. In defense of his withdrawal after many unkind things had been said of him he wrote: "The reason for my withdrawal is this.

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1. K. S., May 1889
2. K. S., June 1, 1889
3. K. S. October 20, 1889
4. See K. S., 1889-90
5. See Nye Meddelelser, Jan., July, October 1890, etc.

For some time.....there has been a movement on foot, which purposed to oppose my activities as a missionary, and I have reasons to believe that this movement was supported.....by leading persons....of the above named church (Danish Church)".[1] The papers, "Kirkelig Samler" and "Dannevirke", heaped all sorts of accusations upon Blohm stating that he had joined the liberal forces of the church and had even become a Unitarian. However, there are no such facts that can be proved and later Blohm is reported as again a missionary of the Presbyterian Church. In his answer to the accusations made against him he wrote to The Committee: "So far I have taken no help from sources outside of the Lutheran Church...I am heavily in debt and if I am forced to open my hands to help from other sources it cannot be helped....I would not suffer what I am, if I were not convinced of God's blessing upon this work. Whatever disorder we have experienced that is not of God, but born of stubbornness and selfishness"[2]. Blohm's work had come to an end. In the light of the facts it does not seem that he was given quite fair treatment. But the real answer to his failure in the Danish Church must probably be sought in the fact that he had been trained under the psychology of the large and efficient Presbyterian Church. The Danish Church was doing things on too small a scale for Blohm.

Never again did the work among the Mormons regain its

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1. Nye Meddelelser, July 1890
2. op. cit., July 1891

former strength. In July 1892 the Rev. Mr. Lillesoe went to Utah to gather up the threads of the disorganized work.[1] About a year later A. S. Nielsen, then president of the Annual Convention, reported that the treasury of the Utah Mission was empty and that for the present at least the work had been discontinued. His chief cause for grief seemed to be, that with the failure of that mission, the last link, that bound the Danish Church intimately to the Mother Church, would be broken. Though the mission had failed twice, he expressed the hope, that there might be found a man of courage who would dare the task once more.[2] When the question of discontinuance came up, the suggestion was made that the Mother Church take over the work.[3] When this failed the next annual convention took steps to dispose of the buildings[4], which was finally done, after several fruitless attempts.[5] The Danish Church Mission to the Mormons was forever closed.

Among the projects of the Danish Church the educational program aroused the greatest interests and demanded the most attention. "Of the Danish organizations in America only the churches have attempted school work. And among these only the Danish Lutheran churches have been interested in school work beyond theological training."[6] Though, as Christ-

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1. K. S., April 27, 1893
2. K. S., October 1, 1884
3. K. S., October 10, 1884
4. K. S., September 18, 1895
5. K. S., June 23, 1898
6. Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 114

ensen states, the Danes have manifested great interest in their schools, this interest has usually been manifested by the clergy only, while the great bulk of Danes have paid no attention to the educational institutions of their church, either through financial support or by sending their sons and daughters to be educated there. During no single year have the two colleges of the Danish and United Church been able to surpass a combined student body of 500 students. In many ways the educational work of the Danish Church, especially during the period now under discussion, has been weak and limited. Says Bille: "During no consecutive five years up to 1894 had the Danes succeeded in raising as much as fifty cents per communicant (member) for educational purposes and the educational results attained by them are even more insignificant than the contributions."[1]

It must be kept in mind that in the beginning of the Danish Church Grundtvigianism was predominant. The Grundtvigians again had a definite school ideal, the Danish Folk High School, the child of an agricultural community especially. Through these, along with the church, the Grundtvigian philosophy of life was propagated. The idea of the Danish high School was naturally carried to America by the graduates from Denmark and in 1872 A. Dan proposed the transplanting of such schools to American soil.[2] At several of the church meetings during

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1. Bille, J. H., op. cit., 16
2. Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 115, also K. S. 1872-3

the next years the problem appeared and was given support in the church paper.[1] It was not until 1878, however, that the idea could be carried out when a private Danish folk high school was established in Elk Horn, Iowa, by O. S. Kirkeberg, who in 1880 transferred the property to the Danish Church. There was some dispute first in regard to the location; some preferred the metropolis Chicago, while others thought the ideal location was a country community like Elk Horn. The choice finally fell on Elk Horn (1) because Kirkeberg felt called to direct the school, but could not leave his pastoral duties in Elk Horn; (2) because the strong and faithful congregation in Elk Horn offered at least five acres of free land and free transportation of lumber.[2] The school was patterned after the Danish high school, in that the boys attended school during the winter and the girls during the summer. The church paper appealed for $2000.00 at once for the erection of a building.[3] The same fall the school was opened with appropriate ceremonies, while during the first winter term nineteen men were in attendance though only ten girls enrolled for the next summer term.

Great hope was awakened for the future of the Danish Church with the opening of the Elk Horn school. The center of the Danish Church, some contended, would now move further west, rallying around its educational center. To this institution

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1. See K. S., January, July, December, 1877
2. See K. S. June 1, 1878
3. Ibid.

the church might also look for a new supply of leaders, teachers and even pastors, as some advocated the opening of a seminary[1] in connection with the high school.[2] Unfortunately the financial support did not supply the needed funds. All sorts of plans were suggested for increasing the fund. Probably the most efficient and the one that remained in operation, for a limited time at least, was suggested by Hejberg, namely, that "School Societies" be organized in the congregations with an annual membership fee of fifty cents----half of which was to be used for local day schools and the other half for the high school.[3] This idea was adopted and put into operation, but it never took on large enough proportions to fully support the school and gradually disappeared.

The curriculum was first patterned entirely after the Danish high-school, offering only a general cultural course, courses in Danish history and the history of the human race. When later a curriculum, more in line with American practice was adopted, a good many of the Danish pastors withdrew their support.

Though the school was owned by Kirkeberg he soon began to complain about the financial problems and burden. In 1880 he found it necessary to resign, as the church paper stated, due to ill health.[4] However, there are indications that the

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1. K. S., July 1877
2. K. S., June 1879
3. K. S., July 15, 1879
4. K. S., July 15, 1880

quarrelsome spirit then manifested in the Elk Horn congregation forced him to resign. It was a great loss to the school, which now became church property.[1] The church took over a $1000 debt with the institution, which now came under the direction of the Rev. Mr. N. J. Pedersen of Cowen, Michigan.[2] The "High school societies" had largely failed, and the annual convention of 1880 voted to put more effort into the raising of money for the high school and in some congregations new societies were organized as a result.[3] But even now there was no general interest manifested throughout the Danish church for the school. Year upon year brought forth a number of lengthy discussions as to the program and purpose of the school. Not nearly all were ready to support the strictly Grundtvigian program of the institution. The Inner Mission folks especially demanded a change. Others wanted to introduce a full theological course.[4] and some of the Inner Mission pastors had no faith, whatever, in the high school, and advocated that it be changed into a seminary.

In 1887 the building was destroyed by fire, but was immediately rebuilt on a larger scale. The general teaching plan was now changed to better suit American demands, which doubled the enrollment. In 1890 Kristian Anker bought the institution from the Danish Church. Anker was one of the best school men the Danish Church ever produced. He was born Oct. 28, 1848 near Bogense, Denmark where he grew up under simple religious

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1. Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 115 ff.
2. K. S., July 15, 1880
3. K. S., November 1, 1880
4. K. S., November 9, 1884, November 1, 1885

influence. After attending several Danish high schools and visiting Norway he went to the West Indies 1871-3. He later attended Askov High School, Denmark and finally came to America in 1881 to serve the Danish Church.[1] Anker extended the change of curriculum, commenced a few years before and under his administration the enrollment reached the 100 mark. In 1894 the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America bought the school and in 1896 it came under the control of the United Church.[2]

A number of other Danish high schools were opened by Grundtvigian disciples who were anxious to perpetuate Danish tradition and culture in America. In 1887 the Rev. Mr. C. J. Skovgaard founded such a school in Nysted, Nebraska. The Rev. Mr. P. Jensen in his "Minder" wrote about this event: "In Nysted, Skovgaard 'got the idea' of a new high school which was to be opened with a bit of festivity.....Kjoelhede and I were invited to speak at this occasion. The beginning did not look very promising. School was to be held in an old building which had been used as a store. Most of the people knew little of the High Schools (Danish). Their interests were more in a (English) College."[3] Too often such schools were opened simply because some pastor 'got an idea'. Little planning and foresight were used in locating such schools and few people could be interested in these institutions which answered a

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1. Jensson, J. C., op. cit., also K. S.; December 1, 1881
2. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., II, 77
3. Jensen, P., Minder, 60

typical Danish need, but, which could not be transplanted bodily to America, without adjustment to American needs and principles. In 1888 H. J.Pedersen, who had labored at Elk Horn, opened Danebod High School at Tyler, Minnesota.[1] Before this he had also started a similar school at Ashland which closed its doors in 1902, while the Tyler school is operating to this day.

It was a very meager school program which the Danish Church was able to develop. The average attendance in this institutions from 1878 to 1894 was not over thirty a year. Up to the year 1894 the average annual contribution per communicant member of the Danish Church did not exceed fifty cents for education.[2] The importance of the church school for the maintenance of a denominational consciousness was never appreciated by the rank and file of Danish Lutherans.

A still more serious----and in the course of time more delicate problem----in the Danish Church was that of supplying pastors and theological training. For almost twenty years the Danish Church depended absolutely for its supply of pastors on The Committee at home, though a few came from other sources as the Norwegian seminary, etc. The Ryslinge High School at first and later the Askov High School, as well as the special school in connection with the University of Copenhagen, had trained pastors for America. "From 1872-1887, when the seminary in

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1. Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 120
2. Babcock, K. C., op. cit., 65

West Denmark, Wisconsin, was opened, the Askov High School had had about eighteen students who later labored (as pastors) in America."[1] Of theological graduates from the Danish university proper only a very few found their way to America. Most of these spent five years or less in this country, up to 1894 at least, with the exception of T. Helveg, who served the Danish Church in America for fourteen years.[2]

For some years, before the plans for a seminary in America began to shape themselves, individual pastors took promising young men into their homes for theological study. Thus for instance, a young man, J. Danielsen, who had attended the Norwegian seminary for a while came under the direction of the Rev. Mr. J. A. Hejberg, while a Danish Lutheran family, Mr and Mrs. J. H. Ruus gave him a free home.[3] The supply through such means was naturally small. But as these, along with other men, asked for ordination, the demand arose for an "Examining Committee", which was finally made up of the university trained men in the Danish Church.[4] The whole situation naturally brought to the front the practical question of theological education. While many suggestions were made, the consensus of opinion in 1876 seemed to be, that The Committee in Denmark should discontinue all theological training in the homeland, but rather help to support a seminary in America.[5]

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1. Vig, P. S., op. cit., 103; also K. S., April 1873, Sept.1874
2. ibid.
3. See K. S., July 1876
4. K. S., December 1876
5. K. S., December 1876

When the propaganda for a high school[1] became strong the seminary question was temporarily overshadowed although A. Dan and others continued the propaganda for theological training in America,[2] adding more momentum to the course with time. In the February 1877 issue of the paper "Kirkelig Samler" we read: A theological seminary (in America) is a necessity. The Committee has been responsible so far. Of the present seventeen pastors only four have not come through the agency of The Committee. It is time for our American congregation to awaken to their responsibility----and significantly enough there was added this observation----The theological seminary must also stress the knowledge of English, so that we can hold our youth. Then the article pointed out the importance of such a seminary to the Home Mission cause, in that it might train special evangelists for opening up new fields.[3] While article after article appeared nothing concrete resulted;[4] and the Committee in the homeland continued to do its best in supplying pastors for America. This satisfied a good many of the Danish pastors who were willing to continue their dependence on the Mother Church. Others appreciated such efforts deeply, but at the same time expressed a degree of shame for showing so little independence. Thus the following confession was made in 1885: "This statement (from the Committee) has

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1. K. S., May 1877, see also below
2. K. S., August 1877
3. K. S., February 15, 1878
4. K. S., August 30, 1882

pleased...many.....We may rest assured that the matter (of theological education) is in good hands. But if we have any self-respect we cannot continue to accept this help as our right, but only as a help in need, given us by friends; we must try to stand on our own feet."[1] Not until 1886 did the Annual Convention give the seminary constructive attention. In spite of a threatening theological storm and ecclesiastical schism the recommendation was made that a seminary be started with J. A. Helveg as professor. After a long-drawn-out debate as to the location, it was finally voted to open the seminary in the vacant high school building at West Denmark, Wisconsin.[2] In March 1887 Helveg moved to West Denmark and opened the school with one student in attendance. It was a small beginning, but it inaugurated an important policy in the Danish Church, that of training its pastors on the field.

The Committee in Denmark was in full accord with the new policy of the American Danish Church. While the problem was still being argued in America, The Committee wrote: "It would be far more natural that pastors be trained with the specific American problems in mind, than that they should come full-blown from Denmark, and then fumble and stumble along because they are entirely unfamiliar with (American) conditions. It would also be the best way to master the English language, in which, as the years go by, our pastors must become more and more efficient."[3] And, when finally the seminary was opened,

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1. Den Danske Kirke, 34
2. Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 124
3. Nye Meddelerser, October 1886

The Committee expressed its joy and congratulated the Danish Church in the happy choice of its professor, the capable Helveg.[1]

The seminary in West Denmark by no means was destined to sail the smooth waters of unhindered progress. In 1888 another professor was added to satisfy the large group of Inner Mission pastors in the Danish Church, and P. S. Vig was elected to be the co-worker of Helveg.[2] Both men were young and capable. But both showed marked differences in personality and theology. Helveg, a product of the attitude and culture of the University of Copenhagen was a thoroughgoing Grundtvigian with an artistic bent. He was a capable, independent and original thinker. Vig was a true son of the Danish peasant class. Vigorous and sturdy, he was a fighter by nature, ready to stake all on his religious convictions, which were Inner Mission by training. As a matter of fact, a self-made man, he had little taste for the intellectual, and artistic flights of a Grundtvigian imagination. The solid and unwavering foundation of historical Lutheranism was his assurance and hope of the future of Danish Lutheranism. To champion such Lutheranism was the joy of his life. The two schools clashed within the wall of the seminary and co-operation soon proved impossible. After a battle, which we shall discuss later, it was finally decided to close the seminary in the fall of 1892. The first attempt at theological training was wrecked on the

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1. op. cit., April 1887
2. Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 124

rocks of theological dispute. Not until after the great schism of the church was the Danish Church able to sufficiently rally its forces to open a new seminary in Des Moines, Iowa.

In this period also the Danish Church attempted to establish Sunday schools, Saturday schools, Vacation Bible Schools, and even full Parochial Schools. The efforts of the Danish Lutherans in this direction, however has never been very successful though regarded as absolutely essential by a great many pastors, especially of the Grundtvigian school, who often looked upon the American public schools with suspicion. Several schemes by which church schools might be maintained were suggested and tried but all failed. There was even a time when the Danish High Schools made an effort to have normal training courses to supply teachers for such schools,[1] but they failed and it seemed impossible to carry through successfully any program along that line.[2]

Almost from the very beginning of the Danish Mission isolated attempts were made to give separate instruction to Danish Lutheran children. In 1873 Mrs. J. Noergaard opened such a school in Manistee, Michigan, but progress was slow and spasmodic. A Danish Elementary School was opened in the large Danish center of Racine in 1877 by R. Nielsen.[3] The same year P. N. Boysen wrote from Clinton, Iowa that "no one needs to be a prophet to know that without Danish Elementary Schools the

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1. Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 121. Such courses are still offered at Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa.
2. Compare, Bille, J. H., op.cit., 25 ff.
3. See Nielsen's account in Den Danske Kirke, 68 ff

Danish folk and church life must quickly go to its death."[1] An elementary school which was opened in Clinton, Iowa operated for thirty years and was able to hold the support of the large Danish community here. This was, however, an exception.

When the high school problem was under discussion it was frequently argued that elementary and catechetical schools would have to be maintained as "feeders" for the high schools. Feeble efforts continued here and there to establish regular schools, sometimes offering all of the elementary subjects, but more often confined to religious instruction alone. In 1881 Lillesoe wrote of the fine work of the school in Manistee, Michigan referred to above. Forty children were then attending daily. While he taught in the morning, Mrs. Lillesoe held classes in embroidering and other hand work for girls in the afternoon.[2] Occasional reports to the paper in the homeland called forth comments of joy over the increase in such schools.[3] One defect in the system was the lack of proper kind of books and papers. The average Danish reader lacked material that was of interest to the American born Danish child. Several church papers for children were published in the course of time, which, without doubt have been of value and were quite well received. In 1877 A. Dan began to publish a Danish paper for children: "Boernebladet" which appeared for our years. Its value was so well understood that the same

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1. Compare Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 120
2. Nye Meddelelser, May 1881. See also K. S., August 15, October 15, 1880, September, 1881
3. op. cit., April, 1883

year that this first attempt came to an end, 1881, the pastors J. Jensen and H. J. Pedersen commenced to edit "Boernevennen". Three years later this was taken over by M. H. Holst of Cedar Falls, Iowa who for thirty-six years edited this Danish paper for the children. Martin Holst,[1] who, since 1881 to the present day, has been one of the leading laymen of the Danish Church, was born in Roedding, Slesvig, April 13, 1856. His elementary education he received in Denmark where he also attended Askov High School for three years. Then he taught Danish in Slesvig until the Germans put an end to it. In 1881 he came to Elk Horn. After spending a short while in Des Moines he came to Cedar Falls where he soon began to publish the Danish paper "Dannevirke", semi-official paper of the Danish Church. To this day it is still under the efficient guidance of Mr. Holst. In 1930 it was taken over by the Danish Church. When all is said, that might be said about the efforts to maintain separate schools for Danish Lutheran children, it must be agreed, that at best the efforts and results were negligible.

The children of the Danish Church offered also another opportunity of service in that the orphans of the church needed help and care. As congregational life developed it brought new social life and interests. "When the congregations were busy building churches and parsonages....the church as a whole worked for the founding of orphanages.....etc."

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1. Nelson, O. N., II, 322 ff.

In 1883 a committee of two laymen and three pastors was appointed to investigate the possibility of starting an orphanage.[1] The paper "Kirkelig Samler" printed a number of appeals from pastors for an orphanage.[2] On August 12, 1884 the first home was finally opened by Rev. A. S. Nielsen of Trinity Church, Chicago, to take care of four motherless children of one family. Elizabeth Nyrup, a deaconess from Copenhagen, was secured as housemother. The Annual Convention of the same year voted to make this home the orphanage of the Danish Church, and about a year later it was voted to purchase a building for the orphanage.[3] A two story house was used until finally new buildings were erected near what is now Humboldt Park. In 1886 the orphanage was reported to be the home of eleven Danish Lutheran children.[4]

From the first year of its existence the Danish Church has made a continued, though often very feeble effort, to carry on some sort of Immigration Mission on the Atlantic coast. In 1872 the Rev. Mr. A. L. J. Soeholm, then pastor at Perth Amboy, N. Y., secured admittance to Castle Garden as an immigrant pastor. As such he labored until, Rev. R. Anderson, in 1878 took charge of this work.[5] No other individual among Danish Lutherans has greeted and brought cheer to as many Danes as has this venerable pastor of the Danish Church. In 1878, we

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1. K. S., November 23, 1883
2. A. Skands Hansen, in K. S., June 8, 1884 and Kjoelhede in K. S., July 6, 1884, etc.
3. K. S. November 1, 1885
4. K. S., October 24, 1886
5. K. S., September 1, 1897

are told 2425 Danes came through Castle Garden.[1] Many of these were directed and advised by the immigrant pastor to look up a Danish pastor as they went west. While pastor of Our Savior's Danish Lutheran Church in New York, Andersen continued to labor for the Danish new-comer and at the same time appealed to the Danish Church in America and in the homeland for financial support. Here again the response from across the sea was often more liberal, in proportion, than that of the Danish Church, which was to reap the benefits from the Immigration Mission, as new blood was added to its life. For building the church in New York the Mother Church raised approximately 18,000 Kroner[2]. In 1890 this church was entirely remodelled at a cost of $12,000, that it might better serve the local congregation, as well as its great floating constituency. Down through the many years R. Andersen has been the indefatigable friend and guide to the hosts of Danish immigrants.[3]

The early nineties of the last century found the Danish Church well established. Though still doing things on a comparatively small scale, an organization was growing up, that was capable of demanding the attention of Danish and other Lutherans alike. From the small group of 1872 the church had grown to a numerical strength of 10181 members by 1890[4] with approximately 130 churches and preaching places. With large

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1. This does not include immigrants from Slesvig.
2. $3500; compare Nye Meddelelser January, July, 1886, October 1887.
3. Lenker, J. N., Lutherans in All Lands, 250 ff.
4. Religious Census 1926, 94 ff.

numbers of Danish Lutherans pouring into America gradually, with the natural growth that might be expected in established congregations, the future of the Danish Church looked bright. But the forces of progress and growth and united strength did not strike down deep into the whole life of the Church. Within the body there was strife and disagreement eating into the very soul of the Church, until finally the two opposing principles rent it asunder. We shall next trace the steps that lead to the schism of the Danish Church in America.

CHAPTER V

SCHISM IN THE DANISH CHURCH

The germ of schism was carried over to this country from the Mother Church in Denmark.[1] In the state church of Denmark, as has been shown, the Inner Mission and the Grundtvigian groups existed side by side. The reason which made possible such co-operation in Denmark, and not in America, must be regarded chiefly as economic. The state church, without discrimination, recognized the two schools of life and theology. While both group leaders had made some suggestions and advances toward independent congregations, the great majority of pastors preferred to depend upon the state for their salary rather than upon the good or ill will of the average independent congregation. As long as their income was assured under the state church there was plenty of room to give expression to their specific characteristics, without transgression upon the same rights of the other party. Prof. Vig contends that the report, which Grove-Rasmussen published in Denmark, contained the germ of the coming schism. Speaking of the Norwegian Conference the report said: "The Norwegian-Danish Conference, of which Clausen is president, will undoubtedly develop friendly relations with the Danish pastors, who, we hope, will come (to America); but that they

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1. Compare Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 93; also Nelson, O. N., II, 52 ff.

shall entirely join (the Conference), will hardly be possible, as the first article of faith of the Conference reads as follows: that the Bible is the only source of the Christian faith, life and teaching.....However, no pastor of the Danish (folk) church[1] can and will truthfully subscribe to this, because of the light which has come to us in regard to the relation of the Word and the Scriptures.....To get that article changed will hardly be possible".[2]

Among the first Danish pastors sent to America by The Committee, we must remember, there were strong Grundtvigian influences. Old Bishop Grundtvig himself had insisted upon a more liberal interpretation of the Bible as was reflected in Grove Rasmussen's report. He also demanded greater freedom in religious worship. Yet while he fought the rationalism of his age, his theology brought forth a new rationalism within the Danish Lutheran Church, which was to rent asunder the church, when transplanted to America. The father of Grundtvigianism considered a good Christian life, expressed in baptism, communion and the Apostles' Creed, the very life and marrow of Christianity, rather than the Bible, upon which the Inner Mission group, together with all conservative Lutherans, stood squarely.[3] The spiritual children of Grundtvig in America did not follow these principles absolutely. While they emphasized, in a very wholesome way, the

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1. Folkekirken
2. Vig, P.S., Dansk Lutherak Kirke i America, 51 f.
3. Nelson, O. N., II, 53 ff.

the deepening of religious life, they have usually been more zealous about perpetuating the Danish language, Danish social customs and educational institutions upon American soil.[1] The Anti-Grundtvigians in America on the other hand were zealous about their Lutheran position and pure doctrine. They also have emphasized Danish connections, in culture and religion, particularly the spiritual heritage of the Inner Mission school. With them piety was the chief aim of life; and for the purpose of gaining and retaining the largest possible number of devout Christians they have advocated to a larger extent than the Grundtvigians, the gradual Americanization of all their institutions. Even during the first years of the Danish Church the two theological tendencies came into conflict. The Anti-Grundtvigians began to charge them with holding the doctrine of conversion after death and of rejecting the infallibility of the Bible. Such views had been advocated by Bishop Grundtvig and were endorsed by most of the Grundtvigian pastors of the Danish Church. In fact these doctrines with others, were openly endorsed by at least two of the American Annual Conventions, namely at Cedar Falls, Iowa in 1886 and Manistee, Michigan, 1890.

From its organization in 1872 to the schism in 1894, the Danish Church experienced many controversies. The first, and in a way the most fundamental, arose in 1872 between the young Church Mission Society and the Norwegian

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1. Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 111 f.

Danish Conference. In the beginning it was a practical problem, but soon theology became the main issue. It was simply the beginning of the conflict between Grundtvigianism and Lutheranism, then represented among the Norwegian Lutherans, but later among the pastors of Lutheran convictions within the Danish Church.

In the first issues of the Church paper 'Kirkelig Samler' a dispute was carried on over the views of Beck and the Inner Mission. The argument ended with the statement that the whole Inner Mission cause must not be condemned wholesale because of the views of one or two of its pastors.[1] The Grundtvigian theology was reflected here as well as in an article about the importance of the use of the Creed.[2] The new church paper took on at once a very argumentative character. This became so evident that voices of protests were soon heard. In one of the early issues the following admonition appeared from the editor: "(But) since the Church Mission Society is no Synod, it is declared here, once and for all, that we will accept no controversial articles (Stridsartikler) of any sort against any of the existing Lutheran bodies, with whom we desire to live in peace and Christian fellowship.....Our paper shall represent no special party within the (Lutheran) Church.....But we will wholly and absolutely belong to the old Lutheran branch of the Church".[3]

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1. K.S., 1872, No. 4,5
2. Ibid.
3. K.S., 1872, No. 4,5

This was signed by three pastors and three laymen. But this was easier said than done. In the January issue of 1873 trouble again stirred the apparent peace of the society when some of the Inner Mission subscribers objected to the Grundtvigian views expressed in the paper.[1]

The Mother Church in Denmark, because of her broader position, never fully appreciated the differences and the problems within the daughter church. During these first years the theological disputes in Amerion re-echoed in the church in Denmark. Provost Vahl of Denmark, whom we referred to above, wrote in the "Almindelig Kirketidende", January 1, 1873: "The Committee for securing pastors for the Danish immigrants .....has sent two men to America.....They suffer much because of the love for dispute (Stridslyst) and the theological bickerings which seem to animate the Scandinavians".[2] Especially, he complains about the Norwegians, of Inner Mission tendencies, who have no patience with freedom of thought and development ("Udviklingsfrihed"), particularly in problems that are not questions of salvation. In the next issue of "Almindelig Kirketidende", Vahl expressed his joy over the article in the Danish Church paper, "Kirkelig Samler", referred to above, in which the Church Missionary Society expressed its policy of neutrality. While toleration was the spirit of the state church in Denmark, "The Committee"

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1. K.S., January 1873, also February 1873
2. K.S., February 1873

within the state church unconsciously contributed to the difference that threatened the peace of the American Danish Church. As late as 1879 attempts were made to bring about larger co-operation, through the Committee, when Beck attempted to advocate greater unity of the Grundtvigians and Inner Mission folks in the support of the work in Denmark. His efforts failed because Dr. Helveg, then chairman of The Committee, was not willing to give the Inner Mission equal rights and representation. Beck contended that they were forced to send their own men to America, and usually by way of the Norwegian seminary. He also referred to the Askov High School as purely Grundtvigian and made the significant observation: "If the gap between the two groups is so great here at home how can the pastors of the Danish Church (in America) expect that the Inner Mission pastors in Denmark should support them in America.....I want to claim the liberty to send a young man to a school of American pastors, who, I feel assured, are honest Lutheran Christians".[1] There was no note of mutual understanding in that. Yet Beck urged both parties to exercise more Christian charity. And as has been shown above Beck later became a member of The Committee. But at this time he continued to send men to the Norwegian seminary[2] and thus indirectly helped to arouse the antagonism of the Grundtvigian pastors in America.

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1. Dansk Lutherak Kirkeblad, April 1, 1879
2. See, op.cit., August 1, 1879

Gradually the dispute sifted out into congregations and threatened division where it was not already present, due to Norwegian relations. In Racine, Wisconsin, A. Dan was in conflict with the Norwegians.[1] From Minneapolis similar difficulties were reported.[2] These theological problems were of significance only in as much as they reflected the strengthening of Grundtvigian thought within the Danish Church.

During the years of constitution making, after 1878, when the problem of church government, by board or bishop, demanded the attention of the pastors, and gave room for voluminous and bitter disputes, the purely theological heritages were somewhat forgotten.[3]

When the Danish pastors in the Norwegian Church withdrew to form the Danish Association, whose development has been told above, this new organization became, so to speak, a wedge that cut into the life of the Danish Church. In the Danish Church there was, a considerable group of pastors who advocated co-operation with those Danish pastors who had come out of the Norwegian Church. The church paper began to make overtures to the pastors of the Association pointing out that within the Danish Church (in America) both schools were represented. A Rev. Mr. Lyngby especially stressed the fact that these pastors were well acquainted with the real church

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1. K.S., March 1873
2. K. S., September 1874
3. See K.S., October 15; November 1 and 10,1883; April 6, May 8, 11, 16, October 18,1884, etc.

life of Denmark where co-operation seemed to be possible. And, desiring to add more weight to his invitation, Lyngby stated that he doubted whether the Association pastors would secure much hearing in Denmark, in as much as there the Danish Church was regarded as the daughter church. The writer concludes by adding that the task of the Danish Church was not to fight Grundtvigianism, but to establish the Kingdom of God among men.[1] It was of no avail. The formation of the Association could not be warded off. A united effort of Danish Lutheranism was still an impossibility. In fact open friction and unfriendly rivalry often marred the progress of the work of the Lutheran Church among the Danes.[2]

The impossibility of bringing about union with this group of conservative Danish Lutherans caused great restlessness among the Inner Mission group of the Danish Church as well as a desire to strengthen and champion their own position. Among these men for a time at least, stood E. Andersen. The burden of a lengthy historical discussion of the Danish Church from his pen was to prove the advantage and need of a more definite stand in regard to the Symbolical Books. Especially does he urge a more positive attitude toward the Augsburg Confession. H. J. Pedersen saw the danger of such writings, and warned against too much discussion on like topics as it

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1. K. S., April 6, 1884
2. See K. S., May 11, 18, 1884

contained the germ of division in the Danish Church.[1] His prophesy was to come true. While Andersen wanted the Danish Church to include all of the Symbolical books in its confession, nothing was done but to restate that the Danish Church took the theological position of the Mother Church. Though Inner Mission and Grundtvigian pastors alike came out of that Mother Church her confessional position did no longer satisfy the Inner Mission men after they came to America.

A distinct line of cleavage began to appear between the two camps and points of difference became open issues in the church papers, at meetings and in the Annual Convention. Many articles and disputes dealt with such matters as the question of absolution in the rituals, self-communion, baptism, confirmation and the like.[2] Even the Committee was reproved for meddling in matters and thus complicating co-operation.[3] In as much as the Committee in the homeland did not understand the problems of the Danish Church in America they deplored the conflict between the Association and Danish Church pastors. Time, they held, was too precious for such bickering, while they showed that in the Mother Church, differences had been overcome, as they had learned to labor together.[4] No doubt actually laboring to-gether, would have done much to solve the problem between these two church

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1. K. S., October 19, 1884
2. See K.S., all of 1885
3. K. S., March 7, 1885
4. Kvo Meddelelser, July 1886

groups in America.

The theological problems which lay at the bottom of nearly all these disputes was their differing position concerning the Bible as the Word of God. It appeared again and again, especially in the columns of "Kirkelig Samler". In October 1886 Lyngby introduced a discussion on the problem of "The Word of God", in which he argued that the Bible is the Word of God; "it is a living Word and it is God's Word to us".[1] The statement was made in refutation of an article which had appeared in "Dannevirke", in which the assertion was made that the Bible only contains the Word of God. The dispute grew until it included the Grundtvigian position on salvation or repentance after death, which, Grundtvig had held, might be possible. The two parties were growing further and further apart though strenuous efforts were made by individuals and leaders of the Danish Church to avoid the further pouring of oil on the flame. It is, for instance, of interest to note that the Annual Convention of the Danish Church at Manistee, Michigan, 1890 openly and officially censored "Dannevirke" which had made the plain assertion that "the Bible is not the Word of God". There was doubt in the minds of many as to the possible future unity of the Danish Church. But we must now turn to the discussion of the events which brought about the final schism of the Danish Church.

Approximately fifteen years after the humble beginning

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1. K. S., October 31, 1886

of the Danish Church in America, while the doors for further development and growth stood open, there was called into being a society among the American Danes, which was destined to become the cause of strife and disruption in the Church. The Danish Folk Society,[1] founded in 1887, was the first attempt at a purely Grundtvigian society in America.[2] There were several factors which helped to bring forth this organization. Chief among these was the very popular secret societies in America. In the beginning of the eighties the question forced itself to the front in the Danish Church,[3] what attitude shall be taken toward this society which was drawing members from the Danish Lutherans? In what relation should the pastors stand to the same? The two extreme positions of total condemnation and full recognition were given expression in the church paper. Some of the pastors suggested a common-sense attitude and advocated the application of Christian liberty.[4] As a result no official action was possible. However, on the whole, secret societies were looked upon as an evil.

The problem became more acute when the Danes themselves began their own secret societies, some of which took on a rather strong anti-church attitude. Often they functioned as co-operative or Mutual Help Societies. For a while

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1. Dansk Folkesamfundet
2. See Danskeren, 1910, No.31,32,33 article by P.S.Vig, Dansk Praesteskole in America.
3. K. S., September 1, 1881
4. K. S., November 24, 1883

there was a great deal of enthusiasm for these within the church. The strongest organization that developed out of this movement was the Danish Brotherhood,[1] which is the largest organization of Danes, outside of Denmark,[2] having about 22,000 members. As the society grew in importance and influence, in places even affecting the life of the Danish Church, the church appointed a committee to confer with the Danish Brotherhood, especially in regard to its relation to the church.[3] Among the Danish pastors a strong protest arose against the "secrecy" of the Brotherhood, as well as against the religious services, held in connection with its meetings. Seeing the strength of the Brotherhood, and not willing to lose its good-will, the Danish Church, through a committee, again requested the society to kindly abolish both of these practices,[4] so that closer co-operation might be possible. While the Brotherhood answered that it would be impossible to comply with such a request, it also sincerely affirmed that it in no wise intended to oppose the Danish Church or individual Danish pastors. The Danish Church, however, regarded this refusal as a "declaration of war" and now appealed to its members to forsake the rank of the Brotherhood, which was referred to as an "ungodly society". The church paper, in articles from the pens of Danish pastors and laymen,

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1. Dansk-Broderaamfund
2. Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 104,106
3. K. S., November 33, 1884
4. K. S., March 22, 1885

spared no efforts in heaping criticism upon what now they termed the "enemy of the church".

It was when this dispute took on serious and threatening aspects, that the Rev. Mr. F. L. Grundtvig came to the front, on the one hand fighting Danish secret societies, but on the other hand offering what proved to be a dangerous substitute, the Danish Folk Society.[1] Grundtvig was the youngest son of the great Danish reformer, N. F. S. Grundtvig. After taking his degree at the University of Copenhagen in science, he came to America in 1881 to study the flora of this country. Soon he became interested in the religious need of the Danes, and took ordination in 1883, to accept a call to the Danish Lutheran Church in Clinton, Iowa.[2] He first made himself prominent by his violent attack on secret societies in general and the Danish Brotherhood in particular. His extreme position called forth a great deal of comment and even some of his best friends pointed out the danger of his proceedings,[3] while others objected to the publicity the matter was given in the paper.[4] But Grundtvig continued to push his fight with considerable success, which is shown in the following resolution: "The Annual Convention expresses the united opinion that we consider the spirit of secret societies an evil spirit.....and that as Christians and "

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1. K. S., see April 26, May 10, May 31, 1885
2. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., II, 200, also Bille, J.H., op.cit.
3. K. S., June 14, 1885
4. K. S., June 28, 1885

"children of Light, we feel ourselves constrained to oppose such secret tendencies, in that we especially point to the .....Christ-denying worship of the society (Brotherhood)".[1] Others, who had first looked upon Grundtvig's move with suspicion, gradually rallied to his side,[2] particularly when he became more constructive in his program, in that he began to advocate the founding of the Danish Folk Society, which was to take the place of secret societies among the Danes. But there was a great deal of opposition within the Danish Church to the forming of another society outside and independent of the church. The call went out for this new organization in the "semi-official" paper of the Danish Church, "Dannevirke". The invitation read: "It is our belief that the little Danish people possesses a spiritual heritage, which is not without importance to humanity, and it is our hope that we Danes, here in America, may bring our contribution and to see to it that others benefit by our heritage".[3] The purpose of the society was to maintain the Danish language, but not at the expense of English.[4] Mr. Holst in the same connection emphasized[5] the fact that this was no secret society. From the beginning of his ministerial career Grundtvig had naturally been an ardent supporter of the high schools and of all means for maintaining what was Danish. This new society was to champion these

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1. K. S., October 1, 1885
2. K. S., March 14, 1885
3. Dannevirke, April 6, 1887
4. Bille, J. H., op. cit., 28 ff.
5. Dannevirke, July 13, 1887

causes and at the same time furnish an organization, where Danish men and women might have an opportunity to express themselves along lines not possible in the church. There were no special requirements beyond the fact that the applicant had to be a Dane and "no professed enemy of Christianity".

The Folk Society at once called forth a great number of critical articles in the two Danish papers "Dannevirke" and "Kirkelig Samler". Some Inner Mission folks claimed it was merely a scheme on the part of the Grundtvigians to create a party in every congregation in favor of their ideas. Criticism of this kind caused several of the pastors to withdraw their membership from the new society. The opposition grew and P. S.Vig soon became its capable leader.[1] Vig was born in November 1857 in Egtved, Denmark, the son of a peasant family. He early developed a love for books, but had no means for securing an education. After a hard struggle he succeeded in entering Askov High School, where he spent three years studying theology. In 1879 he came to America, but returned to Denmark in 1882 to spend two more years in study. With the exception of a few years in the pastorate, he spent the greater part of his many years of service in the church as professor of theology, first in West Denmark, Wisconsin and later in Blair, Nebraska.[2] Hall speaks of Vig as a man who had a gift at finding out things historical, as well as the

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1. Dannevirke, July 27, 1887
2. Nelson, O. N., op. cit. II, 397 f.

gift of presenting them. He looked like a typical Jute tribal chief------big-limbed, strong, broad-shouldered, long gray beard, bushy eyebrows, over sharp eyes, which were never free from a twinkle of Jute deviltry (Skaelmeri).[1] In August 1887 he voiced his open criticism of the new folk society[2] and in a short time the discussions brought out clearly the two schools in the Danish Church: the Grundtvigians and Inner Missions.[3] The latter, especially opposed the independent character of the Folk Society and feared the "unchurchly" practices to which it might lead. All that had appeared in any way to be "worldly" was opposed by them.

Soon "withdrawal" or "schism" were suggested. Fearing the dangerous psychology of such phrases, some pastors began to plead for peace. The Rev. Mr. Dahlstrom made an appeal for openness and frankness on the part of both parties. "We hope" he continued, "that our church will be spared from schism and dividing controversies. Therefore one must not continually speak of "schism" as a question only of time, and see in every sincere discussion a "theological dispute", or call every article by the bad sounding phrase of "preacher's quarrel".[4] At the Annual Convention of 1887 the Folk Society was a subject of fiery oratory. Open clashes between the Inner Mission and Grundtvigian groups resulted.

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1. See Hall, A. J.: Dansk-Amerikanske Portraetter, 108 f.
2. Dannevirke, August 3, 1887
3. K. S., October 16, 1887
4. K. S., November 23, 1887

Soeholm of Waupaca, Wisconsin, representing the former group, strongly opposed the Folk Society on the ground that it was doing exactly what the secret societies did. Grundtvig became the object of his personal attack, while he in turn defended his society, pleading for tolerance and contending, in true Grundtvigian style, that the work of the Danish Church in America would have no future without such an organization. There were no particular theological principles involved in the whole dispute. One might well say that it was a question of puritanism or pietism struggling with pure Danish nationalism for supremacy in the church. No doubt Grundtvig was anxious about Danish culture and tradition, but he at the same time plead with the Inner Mission people to bring their particular contributions to the folk society. Yet, though he feared division within the ranks of the Danish Church, he was by no means ready to sacrifice personal and intellectual freedom to avoid such.[1] Vig made the suggestion that the name "Danish Folk Society" be discontinued, if not the society. But the problem could not be pushed aside as readily as that. There were fundamental differences represented in the two tendencies. To the Grundtvigian church-life and folk-life are almost synonymous, so intimately united that they are but different phases of the same thing, but usually with the emphasis on the folk-life. The Inner Mission men contended that church-life must reach down into folk-life and "save" it.

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1. Minutes Annual Convention, 1887, 34

The latter is subordinate to and dependent on the former.[1]

Following the word-battle a compromise was reached upon the suggestion of the Rev. Mr. A. S. Nielsen, that the Folk Society desist from any further expansion during the coming year; and he also warned against false compromises, stating that "False peace brings new war". It was to Grundtvig's credit that he offered to give up entirely the society he founded, provided the church care for the "folk-life" of the Danish people. It was finally understood that no aggressive work should be done by the Danish Folk Society. Eventually the Folk Society separated the Danish Church into two antagonistic camps.

During the next few years the gap between the Inner Mission and Grundtvigian groups widened. The delicate situation in the seminary at West Denmark, as discussed above, did not improve the general situation. At the beginning of the nineties The Committee in Denmark became alarmed and urged the two factions to practise more unity, making this observation: "From communications, during the past year..... we have often been left under the impression that heavy clouds are beginning to gather on the Christian and church horizon of your organization. It has seemed to us the two tendencies, which, of late have labored in harmony here at home, have drifted apart more and more among you. We, therefore pray sincerely, that you, who wish to build a Christian

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1. ibid. 38

society, would strengthen the bonds of union by enduring one another in Christian love. This you can do according to the old rule: by maintaining agreement on the essentials and practising charity in the non-essentials".[1] But the daughter church was in no mood to accept any advice, so that in April the Mother Church announced that the chairman of The Committee would visit America to look into the difficulties.

At the Annual Convention in 1890 the battle blazed up, centering especially around the question of the Bible as the "Word of God". It was finally moved by F. L. Grundtvig, and unanimously adopted; That the Danish Church can not assume responsibility for statements in regard to Holy Writ, made by individuals. At the same time the paper "Dannevirke" was censored[2] for using the phrase "The Bible is not God's Word". But peace was impossible. The next Annual Convention at Clinton, Iowa in September 1891, was probably the most exciting one ever held by the Danish Church. In the seminary at West Denmark the situation had become critical. Vig and Helveg could no longer labor to-gether. Again Grundtvig attempted a peace-move in that he succeeded in having the following resolution passed: We, who belong to the different schools within the Danish Church in America, acknowledge one another as Lutheran Christians. We desire honest and faithful co-operation, and.....will add nothing to our confessional basis". Of eighty-five delegates present only seventy-one signed this proposal, and Grundtvig,

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1. Nye Meddelelser, January 1891
2. Den Danske Kirke, 37

with others, began to feel that the split was inevitable.[1] Vig took the lead among those who did not sign.[2] While Grundtvig demanded the withdrawal of those who refused to sign, "Danskeren" on the other hand maintained "that Vig and his followers were true Lutherans and alone had a right to remain in the Danish Church that called itself Lutheran. Vig now resigned from the seminary and Helveg was ready to do likewise should the Inner Mission group insist. Several attempts to have this demand for his withdrawal reconsidered, failed. Helveg resigned with the remark: You are robbing me of my life's work.[3] The seminary was soon to be closed and several attempts to revive it under the leadership of Helveg were in vain. Helveg returned to Denmark and to more peaceful labors.

The battle ground was now temporarily shifted from the floor of the convention to the papers of the different factions. In June of 1892 appeared the first issue of "Danskeren", published first by a private company, the Jersild Publishing Company, Neenah, Wisconsin, representing the Inner Mission group. In one of its first numbers Vig, in a long article, defended his position, declaring frankly that he would not secede in as much as he held to the Lutheran faith ——as did the Danish Church (in America), though some of its pastors did not.[4] The "Dannevirke" and "Kirkelig Samler"

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1. Danskeren, July 21, 1892
2. Ibid.
3. Den Danske Kirke, 38
4. Danskeren, August 18, 1892

abounded with articles giving vent to criticism and party opinions. Christian Falck and other writers criticized Grundtvig for demanding that Lutherans must accept Grundtvigianism as Lutheran Christianity.[1] More and more Vig and Grundtvig now take the lead of the two factions, which were moving further and further apart. The Mother Church in Denmark was becoming alarmed and insisted on better co-operation in America.[2] In order to bring about peace within the ranks of the Danish Church, Provost Hejberg, who for some years had been pastor in Chicago, but now chairman of The Committee in Denmark, came to America and presided at the Annual Convention of the Danish Church in Waupaca, Wisconsin 1892. His strong personality dominated the situation. The two fighting parties laid down arms, made recantations and an armistice, pointing toward peace, was the result.[3] But no sooner was the superimposed authority removed than the two factions again came to open warfare. It was soon evident that the unity of the Danish Church could be saved no longer. On December 15, 1892 "Danskeren" published an invitation to an Extra Session to be held at Racine, Wisconsin in January, 1893.

On January 10-12, 1892 a group favoring separation met at Racine, Wisconsin but due to heavy snow fall, the leaders, Vig, Soeholm and Jersild, who had sent out the invitation, were unable to attend.[4] It was pointed out that there was no agree-

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1. Dannevirke, August 3, 1892
2. Nye Meddelelser, July 1892
3. Danskeren, September 8, 1892
4. K. S., October 5, 1893

ment on fundamentals, and no constitution, that held the Danish Church to-gether. A call was issued for a meeting to take place in the near future.[1] In the meantime the question of the Danish Folk Society had been given less attention, but a vote within the Church moved that the society was still wanted.[2] However, when the invitation to Racine became known the president of the Danish Church, A. S. Nielsen, at once issued a call for a "Special Meeting" of the Danish Church in Chicago, on February 21, 1893, for the following reasons: (1) Because there is no theological agreement (in the Danish Church), (2) because there is no agreemen' on the "Home Mission" program, (3) because there is no agreement on the "Church constitution", which makes impossible discipline in the church.[3] The purpose of this meeting was plainly that of saving the unity of the church. The points above mentioned were the constant demands and problems of the Inner Mission group, which accounted for the fact that a good many of the Inner Mission pastors had signed this invitation also.[4] It was a strategic move on the part of Rev. A. S. Nielsen. But though it kept some from going to Racine, this effort ultimately failed also.[5]

In his opening address at Chicago Nielsen made some suggestions about possible changes in the governing body of

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1. Hye Meddelelser, July and October, 1872
2. K. S., January 5, 1893
3. K. S., January 5, 1893
4. Ibid.
5. Dannskeren, June 19, 1893

the Church and added: "Let the pastors have no influence on the governing body, but let us elect laymen from the congregations, who can tell the pastor what to do".[1] But at the same time he appealed for more forbearance, mutual understanding and future co-operation. According to "Danskeren" the Chicago meeting was called by the Grundtvigians who sought "revenge" and who were in the majority.[2] Yet it must be kept in mind that some of the Inner Mission men had favored the meeting, and, when in actual session, Vig was called upon to read his "plan" of a four-square stand on Lutheran doctrines, more concentrated programs in the work among children, young people, etc. That he himself, as well as others, doubted the feasibility of continued co-operation, does not lessen the sincerity of the men, who made honest attempts to save the church, a fact which was manifested in the adoption of a new constitution. Union was sincerely desired. But personalities conflicted, especially in Grundtvig and Vig, who occasionally gave way to such emphatic language, that both were called upon to retract their statements in the course of the meetings.[3] After lengthy debates the new constitution was adopted with sixty-four votes for and seven against.[4] The Grundtvigian majority had undoubtedly forced through the adoption of this constitution, which they regarded as an

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1. Hvor Skabet skaal staa; K. S., February 26, 1893
2. Danskeren, June 19, 1893
3. K. S., March 16, 1893
4. K. S., March 29, 1893

evil on general principles, but which on the other hand, they preferred to the disintegration of the church they truly loved. Objection of all sorts soon were voiced. Some attacked the constitutionality of the whole Chicago Convention, on the ground that the president had no right to issue the call.[1] Others attacked the constitution itself. Article I especially became the subject of dispute and suspicion. It read: In inner-most agreement with the Christian faith is Holy Scripture, the Old as well as the New Testament books, which we therefore recognize and accept as God's Word to the congregation of saints containing Wisdom to salvation for the comrades of faith, and which, therefore, is our book of enlightenment and strengthening and the basis of our faith".[2] It was indeed a marked digression from the traditional statements of Lutheran doctrine, as was pointed out. But still more objectionable was the Grundtvigian interpretation to which it so readily lent itself. No agreement could be reached, and, by necessity, the constitution appeared again on the agenda of the Annual Convention in Racine, Wisconsin, September 19-25, 1893. After a heavy debate it was agreed, that in voting on the constitution, single articles should be passed by a majority vote while the whole constitution could be accepted only on two-thirds majority. The confessional basis, quoted above was changed by unanimous vote, to read: "As a link in

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1. Nye Meddelelser, October 1893
2. See K. S., March, May 25, 1893

the holy, catholic (universal) church, and, in union with the Danish Folk Church, as our Mother Church, we confess and accept her sacraments and symbolical books, namely: The Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of 1530 and Luther's Small Catechism".[1] The Chicago constitution was finally adopted by a very narrow margin, though in a sense unanimous, as the opposition refused to vote. A definite constitution for which the Inner Mission group, especially, had so long been clamoring, had been accepted. Yet it did not satisfy. The groups could no longer be brought together.

In the homeland the Mother-Church had followed the conflict in America with fear and trembling. To her, unity was of chief importance. After making a serious diagnosis of the situation in the American Danish Church, The Committee submitted their conclusions as well as expressed the hope for future peace. The causes for the split, it was stated, were: (1) Bitter, un-christian newspaper quarrels, (2) The Unfortunate relation between the two theological professors, (3) The offense caused by the operations of the Danish Folk Society, (4) Personal disputes among pastors and other leaders, (5) The frequent turn-over on the Executive Committee.[2] To overcome these differences The Committee suggested the following remedy: (1) That unless two men can be elected as theological

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1. K. S., October 5, 1893
2. Nye Meddelelser, October 1893

professors who can work in harmony,------The Committee take over the training of pastors until further adjustment, (2) To secure peace and good-will in and between congregations, pastors should not be allowed to hold offices in the Danish Folk Society, (3) Church representatives should try to stop public disputes by pastors in newspapers, (4) The Executive Committee must try to keep pure the office of the ministry, (5) Church officials should be elected for three years, instead of one, (6) The Executive Committee should try to counteract the formation of "independent" congregations.[1] Here was a good diagnosis of many of the weak points in the Danish Church and a goodly amount of wholesome and sound advice. It also was in vain. In the meanwhile things had taken on new aspects in America. The Danish Church had adopted its new constitution. Yet almost simultaneously, the culmination point of the conflict appeared, in that, during the Racine Convention, the Inner Mission pastors and laymen formed the so-called "Mission Society"[2] which at once began to publish its own paper, the "Mission Messenger"[3]. It is true the society was organized with the consent of the Danish Church, which was ready to concede almost anything for unity's sake. While the Mission Society intended to labor within the Danish Church it undoubtedly harbored the secret ambition of cleansing the church, or itself at least, of all Grundtvigian influences.[4]

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1. ibid.
2. Missions-foreningen
3. Missions Budet
4. Nelson, O. N., op. cit., II, 53

Officially the Church was still one. But in spirit the schism was complete. There was no "seceding", although Grundtvig spoke of it; there was no "expulsion", as the Inner Mission paper called the split.[1] There was nothing more and nothing less than a complete and thorough schism, rending the Danish Church in twain from top to the bottom, and setting at liberty two forces fundamentally different, the Grundtvigian and Inner Mission groups, to work out their own salvation.

The actual separation came gradually. At the Racine Convention it was voted that the congregations within the Danish Church were to sign the new constitution by February 1, 1894, or, failing to do so, consider themselves expelled.[2] By February 14, 1894 it was clear that at least eighteen congregations had left the Danish Church.[3] In March the "Kirkelig Samler" reported that forty congregations had signed the constitution,[4] and made the announcement that: "These now constitute the Danish Church.....and those congregations and pastors who have refused to sign the constitution, have, through such refusal, severed their relations with the (Danish) Church". However the fight did not cease here. It was carried back into a great many of the congregations, where local divisions took place, thus frequently calling into existence two struggling congregations where previously one had existed with difficulty, duplicating the efforts of Danish Lutheranism

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1. Compare, Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 95
2. Danskeren, December 29, 1893
3. Den Danske Kirke, 39
4. K. S., March 5, 1894

in a deplorable manner. Local animosities often became so strong and bitter that the efforts of either faction have never been able to bring forth any visible fruit of their labors. The spirit of strife and animosity left little room for the Spirit of God.

Before we turn to the Period of Reconstruction in Danish Lutheranism, it is necessary first to point out the final effect the schism had upon The Committee in Denmark. The Committee had sincerely and honestly attempted to play a guiding part in the daughter church in America. When in the hour of crisis the Danish Church refused to accept any advice, and not always in the kindest terms, The Committee, without further apology, announced, that in as much as its function as advisor was no longer needed, it declared itself dissolved.[1] This step was taken only after long and thoughtful consideration. The several attempts which The Committee had made during the last few years to establish peace in the Danish Church had all failed. Under such conditions it was impossible to speak concerning Danish American Mission matters before congregations in Denmark. The conflict in America was re-echoed in many papers throughout the length and breadth of the little kingdom. Deep sorrow stirred the hearts of men in the Mother Church, who could not appreciate the depth of feeling and convictions, that ran deep in the lives of Danish Lutherans, removed from the State Church, and transplanted to a country of religious

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1. Nye Meddelelser, January 1894

freedom, though intolerance was by no means eliminated.

In its farewell message to the Danish Church (in America) The Committee had no bitter words to say. But it expressed its thanks to the men who had been ever ready to co-operate and its joy over the fact that the Danish Church had grown to such proportions that it was now ready to continue independently(?), without help from home.[1] The feeling of independence however was not as strong as the Mother Church might have expected, as future developments clearly indicate.

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1. Danskeren, March 29, 1894

CHAPTER VI

THE PERIOD OF RECONSTRUCTION

The last decade of the nineteenth century was a period of realignment and reconstruction of forces among the Danish Lutherans in America. Here and there divisions, or unions, drew new lines, which represented more clearly marked principles of theology and practice.

In a previous chapter we have traced the founding and development of the branch of Danish Lutheranism, which, coming by way of the Norwegian Lutherans, formed the Danish Lutheran Association. According to the report of its second Annual Convention, in 1885, the total strength consisted of nine pastors, nineteen congregations and fifteen mission stations or preaching places.[1] When this same branch of Lutheranism, together with the Mission Society, formed the United Danish Church, in 1896, it reported forty-four ministers, sixty local congregations and a membership of approximately 6,500.[2] There were two forces in particular that had made possible this commendable growth. On the one hand, there was a pietism, characteristic of the pastors of this Association, which was largely of Norwegian origin, but which gave birth to a missionary zeal of vital importance. On the other hand this group was filled with an anti-Grundtvigian consciousness, that added more zest to their missionary zeal, and heightened their desire for

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1. Dansk Lutherask Kirkeblad, October, 1885.
2. Bureau of Census, 1926, 121 ff.

gathering their fellow Danes into the Danish Lutheran Communion. Already in 1877, when the 'Danish Mission Committee' was organized within the Norwegian Danish Conference, this anti-Grundtvigian spirit had been given expression in the D. L. K., the official organ of the committee. The writer, a Norwegian pastor, referred here to J. A. Hejberg's opposition to the Norwegian pastors speaking of him critically as a Grundtvigian. Then he went on to show that the Norwegian pastors did not oppose the pastors of the Danish Church, just because they were Danish, but because they were Grundtvigian, which is notLutheran, but rather nationalistic. The two attitudes, he contended, could not be reconciled. Again this writer took occasion to point out that the Norwegians were the first ones to labor among the Danes, as well as the first ones to train pastors for the Danish congregations.[1] When, in the course of time, the Danes left the Norwegian Church to form their own organization, the anti-Grundtvigian attitude was not left behind, but was carried along as an element of their driving force. Their official paper, the Danish Lutheran Church Paper,[2] we are told, was to represent true Danish Lutheranism, especially since the paper of the Danish Church, "Kirkelig Samler", was not regarded as Lutheran.[3]

The vigor and enthusiasm of this organization, whatever may have been the forces of its inspiration, resulted immediately in a constructive program and considerable growth. During

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1. D. L. K., August, 1877.
2. Dansk Lutherak Kirkeblad.
3. D. L. K., August, 1877.

the first year of the Association, A. M. Andersen, opened a theological school at Blair, Nebraska, for the training of a ministry on the field of operations. While no great things could be done by so small a group, the seminary filled an important place in the establishing of the new church, and grew to be an institution, worthy of imitation, by the Danish Church. Under the able and devoted leadership of Andersen and Christiansen a number of men were trained to take up work in the many mission fields among the Danes.[1]

Another force within the Association, stimulating particularly the pastors in their difficult, and often lonesome fields of labor, were the papers published by this group. The Danish Lutheran Church Paper was a welcome visitor in the simple parsonage or lonely farm house in the west. Devotional material and "Samfunds Nyneder"[2] made up the greater part of this paper. Its history has been that of hard struggle for existence, little appreciated by the great bulk of Danish Lutherans, and usually labering under financial handicap. In 1892 it was decided to publish the Church Paper three times, rather than twice a month, an indication of greater interest. At the Annual Convention the same year it was voted to publish a children's paper, "Boernebladet"[3]. When the merger took place four years later the two papers were continued, the latter under the same name, the former merging with the 'Missions Budet' of the Mission Society.

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1. See D. K. L. March, 1895, June 20, 1896, et al.
2. Association News.
3. Minutes of Merger Meeting, 1896, 21-2.

There was a spirit of optimism in the reports of the Association just previously to its union with the Mission Society. The Annual Report of 1896 described the general growth of the church, especially the Sunday schools and work among the young people. Here and there suggestions were made for extending the scope of activity. The heavy immigrations, for instance, called for increased activities among the Danish newcomers.[1] During the same period the Inner Mission program was enlarged in that an orphanage was opened with six children for which the Rev. M. F. Clausen gave temporary free housing at Albert Lea, Minnesota, while a committee was appointed to elect a permanent location.

Another aspect of the Home Mission program, though for a time regarded as Foreign Mission work, was the activity among American Indians in Oklahoma. In 1892 appeals were made for work along this line,[2] and for quite a number of years, N. L. Nielsen faithfully labored at this most discouraging task.[3] The interest in this mission project had first been sponsored by G. B. Christiansen, when he was president of the Blair seminary. In 1890 N. L. Nielsen, who had been under Inner Mission influence in Denmark, came to Blair to prepare for work among one of the numerous Indian tribes. The Annual Convention of 1892 laid plans for the work and during the summer of that year Nielsen opened up work among the Cherokee Indians.

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1. Min. Danish Ass., 1896, 13.
2. D. L. K., August 1, 1893.
3. Op. cit., Feb. 10, July 1, 1895.

The beginning was hard; but Nielsen and his wife soon felt at home in the work, learning the Cherokee language after a long and hard struggle, thus enabling them to bring the message of the Gospel directly "to the red children of the forest."[1] The Nielsens first won their way into the hearts of the Indians by holding services for the children. But soon requests were made for a day-school, which was opened at once with eight Indian pupils in attendance. Nielsen continued in his work and atthe Annual Convention of 1894[2] he was ordained and for many years remained the only 'foreign missionary' of the Danish Church, sometimes with one, sometimes with two assistants. No other foreign mission work was attempted by the Association.

The field of activity of the Danish Association up to the year of the merger has been surveyed. From many sources the desire for further expansion found expression. An opportunity better to satisfy this longing was offered when the group of pastors, who had withdrawn from the Danish Church, made proposals for cooperation. We shall next trace the steps in this union movement.

The Mission Society, or, as it was officially named, the Society for Evangelical Lutheran Mission (Work) among Danes in America[3], was founded at the Annual Convention of the Danish Church in Racine, Wisconsin, 1893, with a membership of nineteen pastors and two missionaries, for the purpose of carrying

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1. Our For. Miss., 8.
2. Ibid.
3. Evangelsk Lutherak Missionsforening iblandt Danske i Amerika.

on independent activity within the Church. What change this society was to bring about was little suspected at its founding. Nearly all the pastors and congregations, who were in agreement with the purpose of the Society, were gradually shut out of the Danish church, since they were unwilling to sign the new constitution. When these pastors found themselves excluded from the Danish Church they began to lay plans for a new organization. Says "Danskeren"[1]: "And we are thus without any church organization. But there are inward ties that find their roots in God. However, if anything is to be accomplished, a more definite organization is necessary, especially so that the congregations can take a more active part," and in order that connections might be established with the Mother Church in Denmark. For the purpose of organizing, this group of pastors was invited to meet with the Elk Horn, Iowa, congregation on April 25 and following days. The fifteen pastors who had gathered in this peaceful little Iowa village were filled with enthusiasm and a spirit of devotion to the task before them. A new organization was created with a new constitution and all the machinery necessary for the immediate tasks. They adopted the name, The Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America,[2] referred to as the 'North Church'[3], though the group generally was spoken of as the 'Mission Society'. On its program 'missions' filled the

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1. Danskeren, April 12, 1894.
2. Ibid., Dec. 13, 1894.
3. Nordkirken.

most important place, which undoubtedly accounts for the fact, that in the course of its history this spirit enabled that branch of Danish Lutheranism not only to carry on its work in Danish settlements, among immigrants, sailors, American Indians, Mormons, but also to reach out into the vast fields of Canada, Australia and Japan.[1] For the present the educational work of the Mission Society was centered in the Elk Horn High School, which was purchased from the Danish Church. When the Executive Committee of the new church met in Cedar Falls, August 14, 1894, encouraging reports about the general work were submitted. More energy, it was stated, had to be manifested in the support of the Elk Horn school if the church was to continue in its forward move. At the fall opening a Department of Theology was added to the Elk Horn institution with P. S. Vig as professor and Dr. Anker as president.[2]

Hardly had the Mission Society become conscious of its separate existence before voices were heard from various parts advocating union with the Association, which in turn gave expression to similar hopes. In May, 1895, one of the Association men, the Rev. Mr. A. J. Dahm, wrote: "Let us, whether members of the...Association or of the Mission Society awake--to more vigorous work, in bringing the means of grace to our countrymen in America. It seems very desirable that, in the near future, a union should be consummated between our Association and the Mission Society."[3] The main purpose of this

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1. Christensen, T. P., op. cit., 96.
2. Danskeren, August 16, 1894.
3. D. L. K., May 1, 1895.

union, by which both parties would gain, the writer suggested, should be the building of a larger seminary with at least three professors, in order that pastors might be given the best kind of training. The papers representing the two branches of Danish Lutheranism of Inner Mission tendencies continued to advocate such a union program for in these there was a real inner and spiritual agreement.[1] It was not long until committees were appointed to arrange for union mission meetings wherever such were possible. This led to the next step in cooperation, when at the First Annual Convention of the North Church, in Cedar Falls, it was voted to cooperate with the Association in the publishing of "Boernebladet", and the Rev. Mr. Chr. Falck was elected co-editor.[2]

At a later meeting held in Blair, Nebraska, it was agreed, that in order to make possible a union of the two bodies, there must be harmony of opinion on the following three points: The Word of God, Confession of Faith, and a church constitution. Commenting on this, G. B. Christiansen wrote a little later: "If we go a little further, i.e. from the Scriptures and the question of the Communion of Saints, to the problem of the church's field of labor (Ageren), as it lies before us in its deplorable state, overgrown with thorns and thistles, or, in other words, penetrated by fanaticism, sects, materialism and the spirit of formalism,

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1. See D. L. K. July 1, 1895.
2. Op. cit., October 10, 1895.

then the whole situation cries out: Sons of God league together for battle, prayer and work for Jesus, for his glory and the salvation of souls."[1] When the Association met in Annual Convention in Albert Lea, June 4-10, 1896, it was unanimously voted, that the Danish Association should join with the North Church, on God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions, to form a united church, adding the suggestion that a union meeting be held in the fall of 1896, or not later than the fall of 1897. At the same meeting a joint-constitution was thoroughly discussed and adopted.[2] Things began to move more rapidly than some of the pastors of the two parties had anticipated, and the Merger Meeting was held in Immanuel's Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, September 30 to October 2, where on Thursday afternoon, October 1, the actual merger took place with proper ceremonies. "Thus came into existence the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, while October 1, 1896, stands out as a milestone of church history among the Danes in America,"[3] twenty-five years after Grove-Rasmussen made his itinerary among American Danes. The union comprised approximately seventy pastors and missionaries, with seventy-five congregations in the actual merger, and in addition about fifty that were not formally united with the new body, but were served by its clergymen.

Under the able direction of G. B. Christiansen, who

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1. D. L. K., May 1, 1896.
2. Op. cit., June 20, 1896.
3. Op. cit., October 10, 1896.

was elected the first president of the United Church, a position which he occupied for more than twenty-five years, the work of reorganization went on smoothly and rapidly. From November 1, 1896, the two papers of the merged bodies were united and appeared as the Danish Lutheran Church Paper, while a paper for the young people, was also published.[1] Elk Horn School, which in 1894 had been purchased by the North Church, now became a United Church institution, and here for the balance of the school year the theological work was continued, after which it was transferred to the former Association school, Trinity Seminary, in Blair, Nebraska. The Inner Mission forces represented in Danish Lutheranism in America were now united and began the work among Danes in America which has enjoyed a gradual growth and expansion to this day. This church embodied and gave expression to a spirit that had not found full freedom within the Danish Church, nor among Norwegian Lutherans. In an attempt to evaluate the typical spirit of the new organization the Minutes of the Association in 1896 make the following observation: "Churchliness and morality are not enough for salvation. It is a question of individual experience and assurance. Every individual man must become absolutely sure in regard to the forgiveness of his sins."[2] This statement largely characterizes the spirit of the United Church which was, and to some extent it is today the underlying idea of the Evangelistic Meetings and Mission

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1. De Unges Blad.
2. Min. Dan. Ass., 1896.

fests[1], usually held once a year in every congregation.

The United Church seriously faced the task of gathering into its fold the thousands of Danish Lutherans, scattered far and wide throughout the States. Their most serious problems were not those of organization, but, as Professor Vig brought out in an address before the Merger meeting, they were problems peculiar to the Danes.[2] The Danish Lutherans, he stated, coming from a state supported church, did not appreciate their duties toward church and pastor under the new conditions. Another difficulty was the fact that the Danes were very nationalistic on one hand, but too ready to forget all that was Danish on the other. Says he: "Of no nation have more proud words been spoken, than of the Danish, even here in America. And still it is a fact that no one gives up more readily their nationality than do the Danes...It is true their national love includes the Lutheran Church...However, as they easily forsake their nationality so they also readily join sects." The leaders had come to realize that the problem of Danish Lutheranism in America could be settled in this country only and not across the sea. There was need for real consecration and efficient leadership to meet the challenge of the 350,000 Danish Americans, few of whom had found their way into the church of their native land. "Dear friends", wrote President G. B. Christiansen, "what a field of labor! What an immensely large harvest field!"[3] To lay plans

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1. Vekkelses og Missons Moede
2. Danskeren, October 8, 1896.
3. Minuted United Church, 1898, 17.

for meeting the situation more adequately, the recommendation was made to the Annual Convention of 1898 to devote a special session for the discussion of the Home Mission problem. This was done, but without much response from the congregations at large. Appeal after appeal went forth from the pen of the indefatigable president, now urging more activity on the Atlantic, then the Pacific coasts, again pointing to the larger cities with their thousands of unchurched Danes. He deplored the fact that in California, with its 25,000 Danes, only two pastors of the United Church were laboring, while no work at all was attempted in Washington and Oregon. Pastors and congregations everywhere were requested and admonished to carry on more evangelistic work in their own communities, calling on able laymen to assist in the great and important task.[1] Though progress was made and growth manifest, the progress was slow and often discouraging. This is shown in the fact, that, when the new century opened, the United Church had gathered into its congregations not more than approximately 17,000 Danish Lutherans, to whom eighty-eight pastors were ministering.[2]

The Foreign Mission work of the Danish Association was taken over by the United Church and Nielsen continued his difficult task among the Cherokee Indians. Not long after the merger, however, suggestions were made that the United Church cooperate with the Mother Church in Denmark in carrying on

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1. Minutes United Church, 1899, 77.
2. Ibid., 1901.
3. Ibi

mission work in Santalistan, North India, as well as in China. While nothing could be accomplished at first, free-will offerings were collected in a few congregations,[1] until finally a special Foreign Mission Committee was appointed, which through meetings and articles in the church papers was able to stir up more interest in this task of the church. It was due, partly at least, to the efforts of that committee that, in 1908, the United Church was ready to support its first missionary to Japan, the Rev. J. M. Th. Winther. Winther a few years before had gone to Japan, supported by a small group in Denmark.[2] The Japan Mission has, without doubt, been the most successful mission field of the United Danish Church, and, for a good number of years, has been a point of contact with the former United Lutheran Synod South, and now with the United Lutheran Church in America.

When the United Church transferred its theological department from Elk Horn, Iowa, to Blair, Nebraska, in 1897, this became the main educational center of the new church. No efforts were spared, to develop Trinity Seminary into an institution capable of offering the best training to the youth of the United Church. The Annual Convention of 1897 passed a rsolution that four years of preparatory and three years of theological work be offered at Blair. A year later the faculty was increased, so that there were now two full-time professors in the department of theology: P. S. Vig and V. C. Mengers, and two in the preparatory school; A. J. Dahm and C. X. Hansen.[3] The latter is faithfully laboring in the

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1. Op. cit., 1899.
2. Ibid., 1902, 25.
3. Ibid., 1898.

same institution,now known as Dana College, to this day. With the gradual introduction of a regular American curriculum the attendance in the preparatory department increased until in 1900 there were about 100 students in attendance which is about equal to the present student body. For a few years in the early twenties the attendance reached the two hundred mark, when a full college course was introduced. The chief problem, which the school at Blair has had to face has been its financial handicap. In 1899 both schools of the United Church, the one at Elk Horn as well as the one at Blair, were in such sad financial condition that the presidents of both institutions resigned,[1] necessitating a complete realignment of the work in the two schools. The chief part of the educational work was now concentrated in Blair, while Elk Horn became a type of Danish Folk High School. It struggled along until the world war, when its doors were closed, never to be opened again as a full time educational institution of the United Church.

As the activities of the United Church increased it became more and more evident that greater efforts must be made to enlist the cooperation and talents of the young people. Some local congregations had formed young people's societies of their own, but in the Convention Minutes of 1898 it was recommended that these young people societies form larger units for mutual help and inspiration. This suggestion was immediately followed and often carried out in connection with

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1. Op. cit., 1899, 18.

the mission fests.[1] A good many of the older pastors voiced their objection to such an organization, fearing that it might threaten the unity of the church. This work soon aroused increased interest among the young, who carried it on so effectively, that the United Church gave it special recognition, appointing a committee of five from among the leaders, to cooperate with the official Board of the church. One of the special projects of the young people was to arouse more interest in the schools of the Danish church. There was some success in certain localities where the Danish element was very strong, but, on the whole the schools of the United Church did not succeed in drawing the sons and daughters of the church.[2] In fact, the whole problem of holding the young people within the Danish churches has been one of much discussion and discouragement. This has been due chiefly to the persistent use of the Danish language. Often the extremely paternalistic attitude of the pastors thwarted the enthusiasm of the young folks. Seeking larger freedom of activity they then went to other churches and were lost to the Danish Lutherans.

Among the pastors of the United Danish Lutheran Church there had been strong voices raised in criticism of the Danish Church because of its intimate relation to the Mother Church in Denmark. Yet the new church was hardly organized before a committee was selected to secure the appointment

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1. Op. cit., 1898, 27.
2. D. L. K., June 26, 1901; also Min. United Church, 1900.

of a Committee in Denmark in behalf of the United Church.[1] V. Beck, who by telegram had expressed his joy because of the organization of this church, became the connecting link in this attempt. Late in 1896 such a Committee was formed with the following members: V. Beck, chairman, H. Mathiesen and A. Busch, as well as two Inner Missionaries; C. B. Kjaer and Chr. Beck.[2] Referring to this committee the president of the United Church wrote: "This is an important link of the church (in Denmark)...with the countrymen in America", because it brought the spirit and blessings of the Inner Mission to these shores, which, it was pointed out, was of importance for the maintenance of a conservative biblical position.

We have traced the development and growth which came to the United Church through the union of the two branches of Lutheranism among the Danes, who claimed to represent the conservative Danish Lutheran element. We next turn to the period of reconstruction within the Danish Church. While the United Church was ready to face the future with a numerical strength larger than had ever been recorded by any Danish church, the original body of Danish Lutheranism had become weakened and its outlook for the future did not seem encouraging.

When schism was threatening to disrupt the unity of the Danish Church in America, the Committee in Denmark had declared itself disbanded. However, before the end of 1894

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1. Op. cit., October 10, 1896.
2. Op. cit., January 1, 1897.

a new Committee was in the process of organizing, members of which were to be selected among Inner Mission members and Grundtvigians alike. In the meantime the Danish Church went about its problems of reorganization. When these were completed The Committee officially recognized the Danish Church, now incorporated in Illinois as "The Danish Lutheran Church Educational Society", as in full harmony with the doctrinal position of the Danish Folk Church. The former annual government grant of 3,000 kroner to the Danish Church in America which was discontinued with the old Committee, was allowed again upon special petition from the new Committee. As far as the home ties were concerned the Danish Church had suffered no particular loss. Yet "in 1894 it looked dark in many respects for the Danish Church in America. The organization had never been large in number nor means. But now one-third of its pastors and congregations had left it, and from the economic point of view times were hard. The church fight and schism had threatened the optimism of the great majority of its members; some were even ready to give up all faith and hope in the future of their church...But the embers (Gloeder) were gathered, blown upon to fan a new fire, while at the same time new fuel was added."[1] Under such circumstances the devoted leaders of the church were called upon to put forth new efforts to carry the church through a period of discouragement.

Shortly before the eighteen pastors had withdrawn from

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1. Den Danske Kirke, 39 ff.

the Danish Church it had been decided by the Annual Convention in Racine to build a new seminary in Des Moines, Iowa. Now the church stood doubting and even hopeless. Dared they? and if they dared, would it be possible to carry out the plan? Professor Helveg became the ardent champion of the school and succeeded in promoting the plans, likely because the church was hoping that he would take over the direction of the new institution. However, before the school was opened in 1896, Helveg left for Denmark to continue in the pastorate there. Throughout the subsequent years of service in the Mother Church this capable leader remained a true friend of the Danish Church in America, which is shown in the fact, that for a good many years he was chairman of the Committee representing the Danish Church of America in the homeland.[1] In the midst of these serious problems another one of the leaders of the Danish Church, F. L. Grundtvig, returned to Denmark. Though this son of the great divine had made enemies, he had been honest, fearless and unselfish in his labors.

The only general, but saving interest of the Danish Church, during this depressing period was the building of the school at Des Moines. It called for the united efforts of the weakened church and at the time filled it with new hope. Sacrifice made possible the erection of the first wing of a larger unit of buildings in 1895, and in 1896, on September 27, Grand View College and Seminary could be opened under the

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1. Op. cit., 39 ff.

leadership of N. P. Gravengaard, as temporary president. From the point of view of attendance it was not a great beginning, for until the day of opening had there been no application for admission, and then only one student enrolled. The absence of students, however, did not lessen the festivities at the dedication of the new school, where much was said about the Danish Church and people in America. Many Danes from Des Moines and surrounding country took part, and for them that day was, in a special sense, a holiday. The Danish Church had now the beginnings of a new college and seminary, which, in the dream of a good many, was to develop into a Danish University in America. This dream has never been realized, largely because the great bulk of Danes in America little appreciated the importance of a Danish university. There were, however, a considerable number of graduates from Folk High Schools in Denmark who naturally favored the continuation of that type of school in Grand View College. The Annual Report of 1900 states that the college and seminary were to be the unifying forces within the church.[1] The plan of instruction followed was usually the lecture method of the Danish High School, though gradually there were added courses of a more practical nature, especially of the commercial type. The addition of such subjects tended to increase the student body so that by 1900 there were approximately one hundred students in attendance, some taking brief courses covering

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1. Min. Danish Church, 1900.

only two to six weeks. Rarely in the subsequent years has the attendance gone much beyond that number. In 1904 the unit of buildings was finally completed, and has served the Danish Church as its main educational institution to this day.[1]

The Danish Church, in the hour of its crisis, had succeeded in building the school which in turn was to exert a creative influence on the whole church in its new program. Old threads had to be picked up here and there and no new work undertaken for some time to come. The papers of the old Danish Church, its orphanages and immigration work continued without much change, until early in the twentieth century the church had regained its former strength and was able to enlarge its program.

When the new century was ushered in, the Danish Church had only half of the numerical strength that the United Church was reporting. The Danish Church counted forty-seven pastors while the United Church claimed eighty-eight on its roll. In the Danish Church there were 115 congregations and preaching places as over against 207 in the United Church. In membership and financial contributions the proportion was about the same, showing that the branch of Danish Lutheranism, which could claim to be the first Danish Lutheran Church in America, was now forced back into second place.

CONCLUSION

Whatever we may hold as to the origin of the Church the fact remains that in every day experience the church, like any other institution, is an integral part of the society in which it is operating. For this very reason the transplanting of a church from one social background to another, or from one continent to another, is no small task. It is indeed a task that demands patience and sacrifice on the part of those who attempt it. In common with the other foreign language groups among the American churches, the Danish Lutherans have faced and accomplished such a transplanting.

In the process of carrying out this task, many forces have been active, depending on the particular circumstances out of which the respective language groups have come. In the case of Danish Lutheranism, there were especially two distinct forces which helped to shape the spirit and policies of the two Danish Lutheran groups. There was first of all the pietism of the Inner Mission school, which stood out distinctly from the religio-cultural spirit of the Grundtvigians. But common to both was a strong Danish nationalism. When Danish Lutheranism was first transplanted to America it came in the form found and practiced in the Mother Church in Denmark. After twenty-five years of struggle and conflict under new social environment and influences, the two schools became clearly separated, until after 1896 two churches emerged, namely, the Danish Church, perpetuating the

Grundtvigian ideals of the Mother Church and the United Danish Church continuing the traditions and thought of the Inner Mission movement. The realignment of Danish Lutheran forces in America added new strength to Danish Lutheranism and made possible a larger program, inspired by a greater unity of spirit.

So when American Christianity, at the turn of the century, entered upon an era of progress and expansion the Danish Lutheran churches had also created the machinery and achieved the solidarity which enabled them to enjoy the fruit of greater efforts and larger efficiency. Following the year 1900 both the Danish Churches made great strides ahead, increasing in numerical strength as well as in influence among the Danes in America.

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